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INDONESIAN LEGENDS & FOLK TALES



told by Adèle de Leeuw

ILLUSTRATED BY RONNI SOLBERT



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INDONESIAN LEGENDS & FOLK TALES

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The many islands of Indonesia, stretching like a chain of jewels across the Indian Ocean, are full of forests, volcanoes, temples, mountains, rivers, rice fields, and villages. And there is a story about everything. In the villages, the storyteller is an important person; children and adults crowd around him as he tells why the banyan tree is sacred, why there are no tigers in Borneo, and how the clever mouse-deer outwits much larger creatures. In the evening, when the puppet shows are given, the stories are about kings and warriors and gods.

In these twenty-six legends and tales from Java, Borneo, Sumatra, and Burma, rajahs and peasants, holy hermits and fierce giants, children and mischievous animals play the leading roles. Some of the stories are old, some are new; some are somber, some gay, but all reveal a keen understanding of human nature. Miss Solbert's drawings have completely captured the magical atmosphere of the enchanting tales.

all ages

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de Leeuw

Indonesian legends &
folk tale

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THOMAS NELSON & SONS

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BY ADÈLE DE LEEUW

Indonesian Legends & Folk Tales

Barred Road

A Heart for Business

Patchwork Quilt

Rugged Dozen

The Story of Amelia Earhart

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For Tini, Hera, and Jo—
my Javanese friends

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THE LEGEND OF PASOPATI



IN THE DAYS of the Hindus, before Mohammedanism had come to Java, there lived on the island a king whose name was Jamojojo. He was so warlike that he counted his battles by the hundreds. He was always in the forefront, armed with a sort of poniard which had something of the shape of a kris, but which wasn't a kris because that weapon had not yet been devised.

The king had never been wounded; and his people whispered that that was because of his weapon, which he always carried in his right hand. It had been given to him by a tapa, a hermit.

"Take good care of it," the old hermit had said at the time, "for if someone ever takes away your weapon, your power will go with it!"

This was known also to the king of the giants, one of Jamojojo's greatest enemies. One night when the great warrior lay sleeping after a victorious battle, the king of the giants with his courtiers and a number of servants suddenly came upon him. The weapon which the king still held in his hand was taken from him, and he himself was bound and carried to one of the underground caverns in the giant's palace.

Now the king, who had been accustomed to liberty, was extremely unhappy. Separated from his beloved wife, he refused all food and drink which was brought to him, and he seldom slept. But on a certain night, as the moon was showing through the cracks of the dungeon, he fell into a deep sleep. And in his slumber there appeared an angel who said to him:

"Jamojojo, they have taken away your weapon which the old tapa gave you. But in its place you shall receive another weapon, and in a most unusual manner. . . ."

Just as the king was about to ask, "In what manner?" the angel disappeared. Jamojojo thought long over this amazing dream, until one night something even stranger occurred. This time it was not an angel who appeared to him in his dream, but Durga, the beautiful goddess who had once conquered the buffaloes. Durga said to him:

"Jamojojo, someday you shall have a son who will bring you good fortune. Through him you shall acquire a weapon that is better and more beautiful and shaped differently from the poniard which the king of the giants has taken from you."

The king wanted to question her, but the goddess suddenly disappeared.

Jamojojo did not understand anything of his strange dreams. Night and day he pondered over them, wondering about the new weapon which he was to receive as soon as a son was born to him. Because of all his pondering, and because he did not touch the food and drink set before him, Jamojojo grew thin and ill. And the king of the giants, who was not so wicked after all, promised himself that as soon as he had won a battle over one of his enemies he would give Jamojojo his freedom. This happened sooner than the king of the giants expected. Jamojojo was released from his prison and was permitted to return to his queen and his kingdom, a free man—but on one

condition: as ransom he must send to the giant all the weapons in his domain. "Because," said the giant, "you must never fight any wars again. There must be peace in your kingdom from now on."

When Jamojojo heard this condition, he bowed his head before his conqueror and promised that, as soon as he reached his own country, all weapons should be delivered to the king of the giants. This promise cost the warrior a mighty struggle, but he loved his freedom above all.

And so it happened that every one of his subjects, from the lowliest Javanese to the highest noble, brought his weapons to Jamojojo, and they were delivered by the thousands to the palace of the king of the giants.

The last of his subjects to come before him was an old man, the only Mohammedan in Java, who had come from a land over the sea. His name was Pasopati. He laid his weapon at the king's feet and spoke almost the selfsame words of prophecy that Jamojojo had heard several times during his imprisonment.

"My king," said the old man, "we have all had to deliver our weapons to the king of the giants. But fear not, because soon thou shalt have another weapon, better, more beautiful, and entirely different in shape from all other weapons in existence. It is Allah who has so ordained."

The king and his courtiers laughed at these words. "Who is this Allah?" asked Jamojojo. "We do not know him."

"Perhaps he himself is Allah," mocked one of the nobles. "Perhaps he has still another weapon hidden!"

The king had the same thought. "We will not let ourselves be deceived by you!" he cried. "Perhaps you have kept back another weapon that you will want to sell us later! Come, bring it here, or else—"

But Pasopati shook his head at this accusation. He said

that he did not possess any other weapon, and that Allah was not a person and did not live on the earth, but in the heavens.

No one believed him. People called him a deceiver, and he was thrown into one of the underground dungeons of the palace.

And soon no one thought any more of the poor old man in his dark, damp cell—until the day a son was born to the queen. The little prince, who was a wonderfully sturdy and handsome child, brought something very strange into the world with him.

It was a little golden kris which hung at his left side on a golden cord.

While the king, the queen, and all the nobles were lost in amazement over this, they suddenly remembered the prophecy which the king had heard in his dreams. They remembered, too, the last prophecy which had been spoken by Pasopati, who at that very moment was imprisoned in the underground dungeon.

"Take Pasopati out of prison immediately," ordered the king, "and bring him here."

But when the grey-haired old man was brought in and wanted to bow down before his king, he was so weak that he fell to the ground, and his eyes closed. Pasopati felt that Allah was calling him, that he was dying. . . . But still he lifted his eyelids once more and looked toward the little prince who lay beside him on his silken cushion.

"It is Allah's will," he whispered, his voice growing weaker with every word. "He came into the world with the golden weapon, the weapon that Allah bestowed on him. But not for fighting shall this weapon serve. . . ." And then his dimming eyes turned toward the king. "My lord, thou and thy people



shall make your weapons like this one, and ye shall carry them as a sign that someday ye shall submit to Allah's will. Because Allah is great and mighty and everlastingly good. Learn to know him!"

Hardly had Pasopati said this, when he closed his eyes forever.

And in his sorrow that he had punished the old man who was without guilt, the king called the weapon which his son had brought into the world, "Pasopati."

And that is what the Javanese call the kris to this day, the kris which is made, so they say, like the one with which the young prince came into the world.



THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY



KEMBANG MELATI, a beautiful young princess, lived with her old nurse and many serving-women in a palace on the bank of a great river.

Rajah Banjir, the monarch of the rains, lived in his rainbow-colored palace on the other bank of the river. He could cause floods to appear at his will, and his tears made brooks and rivers swell. From his windows he could see the little princess weaving her bridal dress, and he could hear her singing a song for luck. But the princess never looked toward his side of the river.

The monarch of the rains kept gazing at her with great sad eyes. Because he was so sad, he wept many tears, and the river swelled and the wind sighed softly through the high trees around the palace. The princess heard the sighing of the wind, and saw the river rising higher and higher. But she did not know that it was her future husband who was weeping and calling to her.

For many days the monarch of the rains yearned for the princess. Finally, to be near her, he changed himself into a golden butterfly and flew back and forth before her window

until at last the princess saw him and opened the window so that she could admire his dazzling wings.

Then the golden butterfly lighted on Kembang Melati's little hand, kissed her finger tips, and flew out of the window.

A few days later the butterfly returned and perched on Kembang Melati's right ear and whispered to her, "Weave your bridal dress quickly, princess, for soon your bridegroom will come."

The princess heard only the word "bridegroom." She asked, "Where is my bridegroom?" The butterfly did not answer her, for he had flown out of the window.

But someone else *had* heard her question. That was Nasiman, the wicked son of the princess's old nurse. He went to his mother at once. "Mother," he said, "I was standing outside the princess's window and I heard her ask, 'Where is my bridegroom?' I want you to go to her and tell her that I am her bridegroom."

"That you can never be, son," the old woman said, "because you are not of noble birth."

"Nevertheless, I wish to marry the princess," he answered. "Go to her, Mother, and tell her that her bridegroom has come."

Nasiman was wicked and cruel, and his mother was afraid of him. So she went to the princess and told her of the bridegroom who had come to claim her hand. Just then the golden butterfly flew back and whispered in the princess's ear, "The real bridegroom has not yet come, princess. The one who is now under your roof is a wicked man. His name is Nasiman, and he is the son of your old nurse, Sarinah. Do not marry him. . . . Wait till the true bridegroom comes!"

When the golden butterfly had flown away, the princess said, "I will wait, nurse, till the true bridegroom comes."

"This is the true bridegroom," the nurse insisted. She clasped her hands and begged, "Oh, princess, dear princess, marry him at once, for if you do not, we shall both die!"

The princess did not want to die. So finally she said to her nurse, "Tell the bridegroom who has come that I must have seven days to think it over. Tell him to wait on the bank of the river and I will send him my answer there."

Nasiman found this idea good, and agreed. He took a big basket, filled it with food to last him seven days, and had it carried to a spot on the bank of the river.

On that same day the monarch of the rains called to him a white crow, one of his best and biggest messenger-birds, and gave her a little chest full of costly ornaments and a letter. "Take these immediately to the Princess Kembang Melati," he ordered, "and make sure that you don't lose anything."

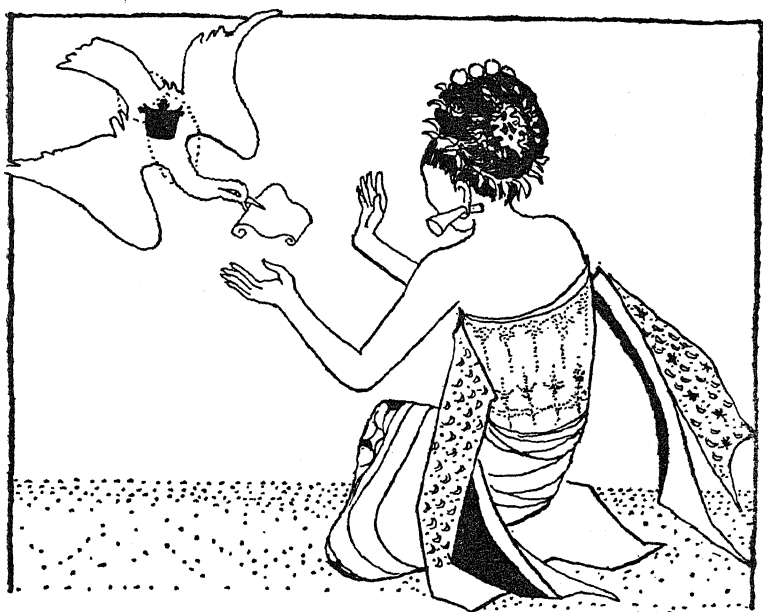
"Don't worry, master," the crow replied. "I myself will take everything to the princess."

The white crow flew off with the little chest bound fast to her back and the letter between her claws, and winged her way to the opposite bank of the river. There she saw Nasiman eating the last of a delicious-looking fish. The white crow, who loved fish, flew over swiftly, and cried, "Oh, how good that looks! May I have a little bite?"

"How do you dare ask me that?" Nasiman demanded crossly. "Who are you, and where do you come from, with a letter in your claws and a chest on your back?"

"Well," the crow answered smugly, "I happen to be the messenger of the great magician, the monarch of the rains! And I am to take this letter and this little chest to the Princess Kembang Melati, as my master ordered. What's more, I am to give them to her myself."

"Hmm," Nasiman said with a false little laugh. "In that



case, I'll let you eat some of my fish. Put down your letter and take the chest from your back, and fall to!"

The white crow didn't have to be invited twice. She laid the letter and the little chest in the grass, and began to eat greedily of the delicious bit of fish.

Nasiman lost no time. He opened the chest, took out the beautiful golden ornaments and in their place put some big spiders and some gruesome-looking scorpions. Then he hurried to his mother with the letter. "Mother," he said, "I can't read, but I imagine that this letter must be full of lovely words. Now I want you to change them, at once, into ugly words. Meanwhile I'll hide these ornaments."

The white crow was so busy eating that she did not notice what was going on. She ate the fish, down to the last scrap. Then she went to get a drink at the spring. The spring murmured to her, "Ah, white crow, why didn't you take the letter

and the little chest to the princess as Rajah Banjir said?"

But the white crow didn't hear. She didn't hear the wind, either, sighing to her, "Ah, white crow, something dreadful will happen because of your greediness!"

And something dreadful did happen. When the princess saw the white crow come, bearing the letter and the little chest, she believed that the bird came from her true bridegroom, and in great excitement she decided to read the letter first. As her eyes flew over the words, she could hardly believe what she read: "You are very ugly," the letter said, "and what is in the little chest is foul and old. That goes, too, for your green hair and your blue skin."

She was so angry that she tore the letter into shreds and tossed the little chest, without opening it, through the window. The spiders and the scorpions swarmed over the garden—to the great astonishment of the white crow who could not understand how her master could have sent such horrible things to the lovely princess.

But Nasiman laughed to himself. Now the princess would marry *him*, he thought.

But the princess had no thought of marrying anyone now. She was bitterly grieved by the ugly letter. Weeping, she paced back and forth in her chamber. No one could comfort her, and she cried, "Take away my weaving stool! I will never weave again on my bridal gown!"

Toward evening of that sad day the golden butterfly came back and flew through the open window. He lit on the princess's ear. "Darling princess," he whispered, "why don't you wear the beautiful ornaments that your bridegroom sent you?"

At that the princess hit at him with an angry hand.

The great monarch of the rains thought surely she was only

teasing him. He whispered in her ear again: "Beloved little princess, would you like to see your bridegroom tomorrow morning? He will take you to his rainbow-colored palace where the golden rays of the sun are magnified a thousand times into the most wonderful colors, and where you shall see woven cloth so fine, so dazzling, that it is like moonbeams! Come, darling princess, finish weaving your bridal gown, for tomorrow your bridegroom comes!"

The princess grew even angrier. She called her serving-women to her and bade them chase the golden butterfly away and never again to let it come inside.

When the great magician heard the princess say these words he became so angry that he caused a mighty flood to come over the land that very night. Everything that was not submerged drifted away, torn loose from the land. The palace with Princess Kembang Melati and her nurse and the wicked Nasiman and all the others who lived in it, drifted on the floodwaters.

The palace drifted farther and farther, until it came near the other bank where the palace of the great monarch of the rains stood. The king was in his doorway, watching, but when he saw the princess's palace floating toward him he pretended not to see it. The princess cried piteously for help, but he pretended not to hear.

They were drifting out of sight when the nurse cried out in despair, "It's my fault! I bear the blame! It was I who changed the beautiful words of the letter into ugly ones! And my son, Nasiman, filled the little chest with spiders and scorpions while the white crow was eating the fish!"

When he heard the nurse's confession, the monarch of the rains understood everything. He leaped down and dragged the princess and all the others out of the drifting palace and

brought them into his own. Only her old nurse and the nurse's wicked son were not permitted to enter.

"May great waves engulf you!" he thundered. And at his words mighty waves, as high as the heavens, rose in the water and swallowed up the nurse and her son.

The white crow was punished, too, for her greediness. She was changed into a black bird which could never speak again. All she could say was, "Kaw . . . kaw . . . kaw . . . kr - kr. . . ." It meant "gold . . . gold." But though the crow searched, she never could find the gold and jewels with which the little chest had been filled.

When the evildoers were punished, the monarch of the rains caused the flood to subside. In a short time, the whole world was dry once more, and when he had accomplished that he turned to the princess and told her that he was the son of a nobleman and that for days and nights he had yearned for her.

Kembang Melati took pity on him. She knew that he was truly her bridegroom from the way he spoke to her. So she married him and lived the rest of her happy life with him in the rainbow-colored palace on the bank of the river.

But, strange to tell, no mortal has ever found the spot where that palace stood.



THE SOUL IN THE MOUNTAIN RICE



TISNA WATI lived with her father, Batara Guru, in the god's heaven. Now Tisna Wati was a most beautiful and charming little goddess, but she wasn't at all happy in the gods' heaven. Sometimes, when she looked down at the earth, far below her, and saw people busy at their various tasks, she would sigh, "Oh, if only I could be an ordinary mortal!"

And when her father had gone forth to do battle with the giants and the demons of the air, she would mourn because she could not go with him. When he came back, she would be pouting and out of humor.

One day, when she was especially surly, her father lost his temper. "Come here!" he ordered in a stern voice. "Your grumbling and your silly whims annoy me, and nothing would please me better than to send you down to earth to become an ordinary mortal. Alas, I cannot do that because you have drunk of the life-water and are immortal. But I have thought of something else for you. I'll choose one of the young gods to be your husband, and he will soon teach you to get over your bad moods!"

"Oh, I already know of someone who could be my husband, Father," the little goddess cried happily.

"Who can that be?" her father demanded. "Not one of those awful air giants, I hope. Because I absolutely forbid you to marry the son of one of my enemies."

"Oh, no, Father, it's not one of the buatas. And he doesn't live in the air, nor in the gods' heaven, either. He lives on the earth. Look down . . . you can see him now. He's that handsome young man who is plowing the rice field that lies on the side of the hill."

"But that's the son of a man!" her father said angrily. "He's an ordinary mortal! You can't marry him; you are the daughter of a god! You shall never marry him. I won't permit it!"

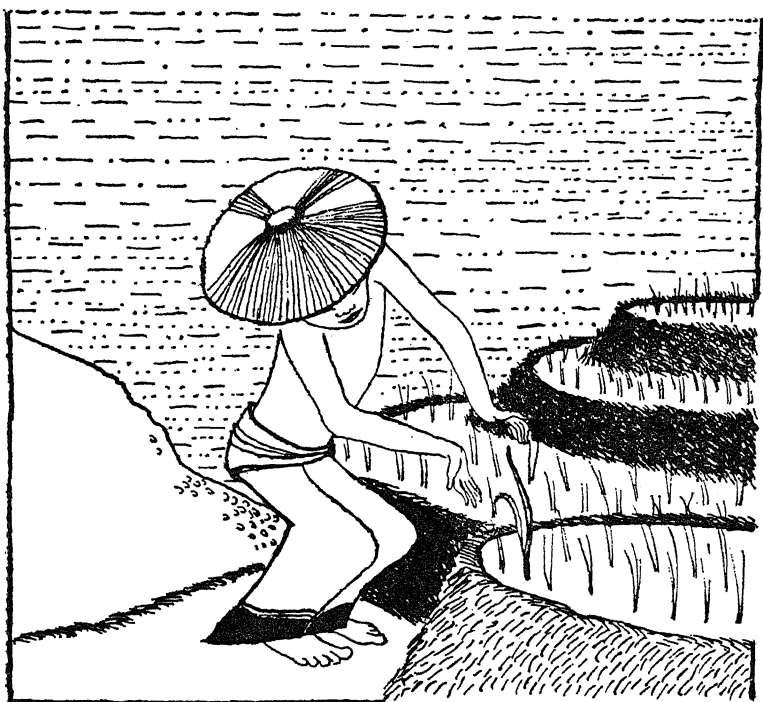
"But I *will* marry him!" Tisna Wati shrieked, stamping her tiny foot. "I will never marry anyone else. He shall be my husband—even if I have to leave this place forever."

"And I say that you shall never marry him!" her father stormed. "I'd rather change you into a rice stalk. And let me tell you that just as soon as possible I will choose a son of one of the gods to be your husband. Do you understand?"

When Tisna Wati saw how angry her father was, she was afraid that her fate would be the same as that of Dewi Sri, the lovely wife of the great god Vishnu, who disobeyed her husband and was killed by him and changed into a rice stalk. It was her deathless spirit that lived in the fields of rice, the sawahs.

But Tisna Wati was not as meek as Dewi Sri. She would never let herself be changed into a rice stalk. And certainly she would never, never marry a son of one of the gods! She had set her heart on the handsome young mortal, plowing his fields on the hillside.

Early the next day her father left to seek a husband for



her. But just as he was setting out, word came to him that the giants of the air and the evil demons were threatening the gods again, and he would have to go to war against them. "When I come back, however, I'll bring your husband with me," he said to his daughter.

Tisna Wati said meekly, "Very well, Father." But as soon as he had left, she leaped on the wings of the wind and was floated down to earth. The wind was kind to her and took her close to the hillside where the young man was plowing his rice field.

Tisna Wati said to herself, "Now I can really see him close." And she sat down on the slope of the hill to wait for the young man to notice her.

When he turned at the end of a row, he saw her. And he

thought she was as beautiful as a vision. He came to her and said, wonderingly, "What are you looking for, lovely maiden?"

"I'm looking for my husband," Tisna Wati answered, laughing.

It was such a strange answer that the young man began to laugh, too, and they laughed together. They laughed because they were happy and in love, and the sound of their laughter rose to the heavens. That was their undoing.

For when their voices reached the place where Tisna Wati's father was battling against the giants and the demons, he heard it. He stopped and listened. That was his daughter's voice! And the voice of a strange young man! He bent and looked toward the earth . . . and there he saw his daughter, sitting beside a handsome young man, and their joyous laughter was louder to him than the noise of battle.

Raving with anger, Batara Guru gave up the battle with his enemies and flew down to earth. When he came to the hillside where his daughter sat beside the young man, he thundered, "Come with me at once! I'm taking you back to the gods' heaven."

But Tisna Wati had no desire to return to the gods' heaven. She was in love with the young man, and her love was stronger than her father's will.

"No," she said firmly, "I am never going back. I'd rather become an ordinary mortal and stay here on earth with my beloved."

"Then stay you shall!" her father roared angrily. "But not as the daughter of a god, and not as a mortal, either! You shall become a rice stalk and your spirit shall become one with this rice field." Even as he spoke, Tisna Wati changed from a goddess into a slim rice stalk.

When the slender rice stalk bent toward the young man, he

stroked it with loving fingers. His plowing was forgotten, everything was forgotten, and in his sorrow he could only gaze at the graceful stalk that had been his beloved Tisna Wati.

When Batara Guru saw this, he was overcome with remorse. "I could have left them together," he said. "Now I cannot change her back . . . she must remain a rice stalk forever, for her spirit is already here in this rice field. But perhaps I could change him into a rice stalk, too."

When he had done this, he saw how the two stalks bent toward each other, as if they were telling how much they loved one another. He watched them a while, and shook his great head. "It is well," he muttered to himself, and flew back to the gods' heaven.

And ever since that day, the story says, the spirit of Tisna Wati has been in the mountain rice, just as the spirit of Dewi Sri is in the sawah rice.

But where the spirit of the handsome young man went, no one knows.



THE ORIGIN OF THE BROMO FEAST

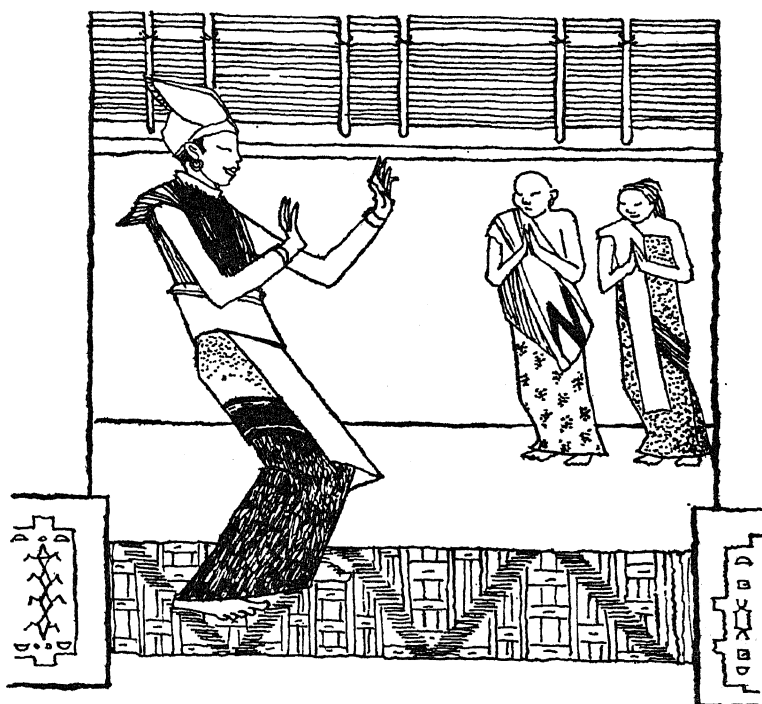


EVERY YEAR the Hindus who live in the Tengger mountains of Java celebrate the Bromo Feast, and this legend tells how it began.

Kyai Kesuma and Nyai Kesuma were Hindus. They had a little house in the neighborhood of the great Sand Sea and lived there in happiness and contentment. But there was one thing missing in their lives: they had no child. And because they were both old, they could not hope to have a son—a son for whom they had prayed to Brahma so many years.

On a certain evening, shortly before midnight, they heard a gentle knock at the door of their little house. Kyai got up and opened the door, and there stood an old and poorly clothed man who said, "Please give me just a handful of rice and let me sleep this night under your roof! For I have come a long, long way, and I am tired and hungry."

Kyai called his wife, and both of them asked the old man in. They brought him a new sleeping mat, and Kyai said, "Rest here and be our guest as long as you like." And Nyai brought coffee and rice cakes, and said in a friendly voice,



“Eat of these rice cakes and drink of this coffee until you are satisfied. And then lie down and sleep after your long journey.”

The old man ate of the rice cakes and drank of the coffee, and then he lay down on the mat and fell asleep. But when Kyai and Nyai Kesuma woke up next morning and looked at the place where they had left the old man, they saw him, surrounded by a strange light, standing on the sleeping mat. Now he was no longer old and bent, but as handsome and straight as one of the gods. He told the old couple that he had been sent to them by Brahma.

“Brahma has heard your prayers,” he said, “and a son shall be born to you. When this son is full-grown, I shall come back to tell you what Brahma’s will is, and I am sure that you, who

are so devout and so brave, will do whatever Brahma demands of you."

Kyai and Nyai bowed their grey heads to the earth, as a sign that they would do Brahma's will without a murmur. And when they looked up again, Brahma's messenger had disappeared.

It was just a year after this miraculous visit that a son was born to them. The boy was very handsome, and the older he grew the more handsome he became. As the years went by, he grew into a strong young man, and he was so brave and tireless and so good to his elders that Kyai and Nyai called their son the support and pride of their old age.

One night, when the boy had reached young manhood, there came again a gentle knock at the door, and once more the messenger of Brahma stood before the old couple. The face of the demigod was somber, and he spoke in a soft, grieved voice.

"Brave people, tomorrow night is the new moon. Then you and your son must climb the mountain Bromo, up to the very edge of the crater. For on that night Brahma will demand your son. You must offer to your god, whatever he demands of you—without complaint."

"Brahma's will be done," said the old couple, bowing to the earth.

Without murmuring, without complaining, the two old people started the next night, with their son, for the mountain Bromo. It was a long way to the place where Brahma was to demand their sacrifice. When they had reached the rim of the crater they knelt on the ground and prayed, "Mighty Brahma, here is our son, the great sacrifice that you have demanded of us. See, here is our child, the support and consolation of our old age. Take him to you. But let us go with

him. Let us die with him. Because, Great Father, we are both so old and so tired. And what will become of us if you take our son away? Who will herd our goats? Who will fetch the water from the brook, and plant the grain, if our son is not here to do it for us?"

With their heads bowed to the earth, and with their son between them, they waited to hear what Brahma would say.

And suddenly they heard Brahma's godlike voice speaking to them. "Kyai and Nyai Kesuma, I will not demand your son as a sacrifice. He will be the support of both of you so long as you live. I only wanted to find out if you were willing to follow me, your god. You have given me that proof; you have honored my will. Go back to your home, and live there happily with your son!"

"We thank you, mighty Brahma, we thank you for your unending goodness," the old people cried with gladness. "We will always think of you with deep love. And we will always remember this day by offering you the finest things that our fields and our herds have to give."

With their son, they hurried back to their little house. There they took the fattest goat out of the herd, and the fairest ears of grain from the field, and they sent their son back to Bromo with these gifts.

After he had killed the goat on the rim of the crater, the son threw the costly meat and the ears of grain into the crater and said, "Mighty Brahma, we bring you our offering, the best that we possess, in thanks for your goodness to us. May this be acceptable to you! And every year we will bring you such an offering again."

And from that time on, on this selfsame day, the Hindus who live in the Tengger mountains have brought their offerings to Brahma, to celebrate the Bromo Feast in his honor.



THE LITTLE SAWAH



A STARVING BOY went wearily from village to village. His name was Dongso and he had been dismissed by a rich widow for whom he had worked, because the harvest had been so poor. The widow was known throughout the land as the owner of the most fruitful acres, but after Dongso had come the harvest had been so meager that he alone ate more rice than the fields produced. It happened not once, but twice. The widow herself had seen how well Dongso had prepared the sawah and tended the young rice shoots, but when they had grown tall and ready to be harvested, the stalks were empty of kernels and hung limp in the sun.

After the second harvest, the village people began to whisper that the young man might be a bad spirit. Perhaps he had been sent to earth by Allah to punish the widow because she was so stingy and made such meager offerings to the village-spirit and the sawah-spirit.

The widow, of course, heard these whisperings, and in anger she dismissed Dongso, without paying him.

Weak with hunger Dongso came one evening to the outskirts of a village and knocked at the door of the first house he saw. It was a little hut in the midst of a small sawah owned

by a poor old woman, Randa Derma. When Dongso knocked, she opened the door to him and he fell across the threshold.

"Please," he said feebly, "give me a handful of rice. I am starving."

"Why do you have to beg?" she asked him. "You look strong and you are young. Why don't you earn your rice? Why don't you work for your food?"

But she was a goodhearted woman and she pulled her unexpected guest into the room without waiting for his answer. She set rice and coffee in front of him. "Eat and drink, my son," she said. "And then tell me why you beg rather than work."

The boy began to eat without a word, trying to make up for the many days he had gone hungry. When at last he was satisfied, he told the old woman his story. "I did my best," he said. "I worked hard all the time I took care of the widow's sawahs. And truly I could not help it, it was not my fault, that the ears were almost always empty. I think," he said slowly, "it was because she did not make offerings to the protecting spirits and they were punishing her. And how could I force them to make the ears full of grain?"

"No, of course you couldn't," the old woman agreed. "But if you will stay with me and work my little sawah, I will give you one fifth of the harvest yield. The trouble is, I have no buffalo. But the field isn't very big. . . ."

"It won't matter," Dongso said. His eyes shone with gratitude for her offer. "I'll do my best for you."

Early the next morning, he started for the sawah, with only a spade. He turned the earth as if he had a fine plow and a strong buffalo working for him. When the time came for the sowing he did that, too, with speed and skill. Now he must wait with patience for the ripening. Then he would be able

to harvest full, fine ears of rice! It was almost as if his wishes were coming true, for the rice stalks grew tall and straight, and the ears turned a beautiful golden yellow.

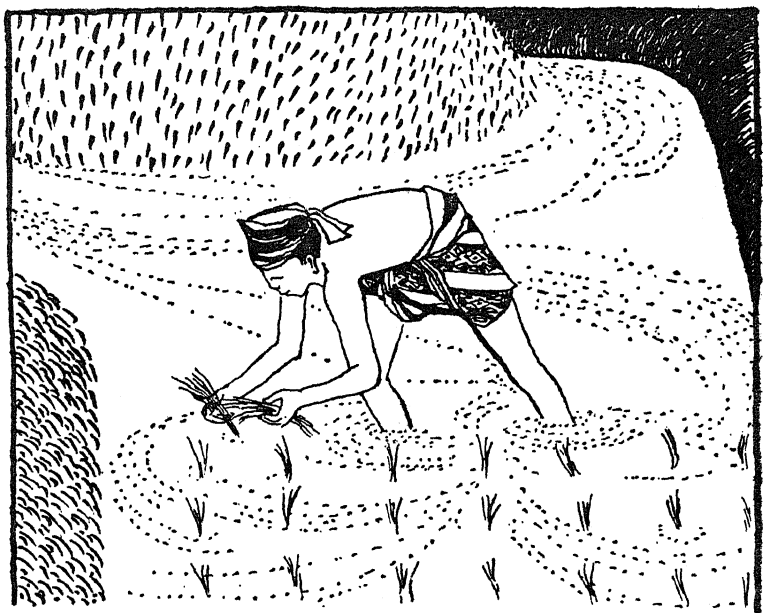
But then the worst happened, the same thing that had happened when he was working in the fields of the rich widow. The fine-looking stalks carried only empty ears, with not a grain of rice in them! He asked himself, in despair, "Can it be that this woman, too, has made no offering to the spirits? Or can it be that *I* am the one who brings bad luck to people?"

He couldn't bear to tell the old woman what was troubling him. She would find out for herself soon enough, when she went into the field for the harvest.

As the day drew near Dongso grew sadder and sadder. The night before the harvest he couldn't sleep a wink. He lay on his mat, tossing from side to side, thinking of the empty ears of rice in the field and how unhappy the old woman would be. The more he thought about it, the more he felt that he could not face her disappointment when she opened the ears of rice that had been cut. Very early, long before sunup, he would leave the village; he would steal away as he had come, and beg from door to door till he found work again.

As quietly as a mouse he crept out of the hut next morning and started for the road. But before he left the village for good, he had to look once more at the little sawah where he had labored so long and faithfully. Walking sadly between the tall stalks, he looked again at the golden-yellow, empty ears. Idly he plucked one off and opened it. As he had thought, there were no rice grains in it.

Then his mouth fell open and he looked again, hardly believing what he saw. There were no grains of rice, but there *were* grains of gold, pure, glittering gold! He was dazed with astonishment. This couldn't be. Maybe in one ear, but surely



not— Dongso picked another one, and still another one, and yet another one, and each ear was filled with kernels of gold.

He ran back to the little hut, and found the old woman busy with her weaving. She looked up at him in astonishment. "Why are you so happy, Dongso?"

Dongso almost told her. But he wanted her to see the amazing sight herself. He wanted *her* to find the kernels of gold as he had found them. So he said, "Because today we are going to give a wonderful harvest feast, Randa Dermal!"

The old woman's wrinkled face puckered sadly when he said that. "No, Dongso," she said with a sigh, "I'm sorry, but we can't do that. We can only make a simple meal. I spent the last of my money on offerings to the spirits of the village and of the sawah so that they might bless the harvest. . . ."

"And so they have!" he shouted. "Wait till you see how they have blessed the harvest!" He took her by the hand and led her to the sawah. The old woman stumbled in her haste to follow his quick steps as he hurried her to the place where he had made the amazing discovery.

Dongso tore off a stalk and gave it to her. "Look inside, Little Mother," he urged, and he watched as she opened the ear and found the golden kernels. He laughed when she shrieked with joy. "What did I tell you? What did I tell you?"

But the old woman pulled herself together quickly. "Now Allah be praised," she said, bowing her head. "My little rice field has brought forth more than a hundred great sawahs could bring forth. Allah be praised!"

She had promised Dongso a fifth of the harvest and she gave him a fifth of the harvest. Now he was rich. He could buy himself a sawah, he could buy buffaloes, as many as he needed, as many as he wanted. But Dongso bought neither a rice field nor buffaloes. He was faithful to the old woman who had befriended him, and he took care of the many spreading sawahs she bought with the same zeal that he had taken care of her tiny sawah. And he did to others who came to help him as she had done to him—he gave them one fifth of the crop of the lush acres.

It has been so from that day to this: One fifth of each sawah's harvest is divided among the helpers. From that day to this, too, there has never been want or poverty in that district. The people of Derma have lived in peace and plenty all these years.

That's what the village was named—Derma, after the old woman who had befriended Dongso and who had been so poor that she could not even offer a harvest feast. But the

Javanese do not believe the village's well-being came from the fruitfulness of the countryside. They believe the good fortune of the village and its people is due to the lovely temple Dongso built to the memory of his benefactor, after she died, on the very spot where once the little sawah had been.



THE CLEVER SQUIRREL



ONE DAY a man was walking through a dense forest. In one hand he carried a kris, and in the other a long lance, in case he met any tigers and snakes along the way.

He had reached the edge of the forest and was congratulating himself that he had not had to use either his kris or his lance, when all at once he heard, just above his head, a most frightful noise. He looked up into the branches from where it seemed to come, and he saw an enormous snake that had caught its tail in a split of one branch.

The snake was doing everything it could to free its tail. Suddenly it saw the man and called out to him, "Oh, help me, help me! Make the split in the branch a little wider with your lance, so that I can get my tail out and be on my way."

"I'll gladly do that," said the man, "if you'll first promise me that you will do me no harm after I have freed you."

"Well now, why should I do you harm?" asked the snake. "You have nothing to fear from me."

So the man made the split in the branch a little wider with his lance and the snake pulled its tail out.

"Reach your lance up to me," the snake said then, "so that I can crawl along it down to the ground."



This the man did. The snake curled itself around the lance but, instead of creeping along it to the ground, it stopped at the man's shoulder and twined itself fast around his neck.

"Ho, what are you doing?" the man cried out in terror. "Why are you twining yourself around my neck? Why don't you crawl down to the ground?"

"Because I want to slay you," hissed the snake.

"But you promised that you would do me no harm," the man said.

"Well, so I did," the snake replied. "But when I promised that, I was still in the tree. Now, I am on earth, and on earth good is always repaid with evil."

The man thought frantically of a way to escape. "Very well," he said, "you may kill me. But first I want to hear the opinion of three others, whom we may meet here in the woods, as to the truth of what you say."

"Good," said the snake. "Let us go."

The first thing they came to was a palm tree. "Ask the palm tree," ordered the snake.

"Palm tree," the man explained, "just a little while ago I saved the life of this snake, and now it wants to kill me because, it says, here on earth good is always rewarded with evil. Is that true?"

"Certainly it is true," the palm tree said. "Look at me. With my waving fronds I refresh the wanderers who creep to me, tired and worn out; I let them sleep in my shade. And after they are refreshed, they hack me into little pieces with their sharp axes and throw me into the fire."

"Do you hear what the palm tree says?" asked the snake, twisting itself still tighter about the man's throat.

They went a little farther, until they came to a brook. The man told the brook how he had saved the life of the snake and how it wanted to kill him because on earth good is always repaid with evil.

"The snake is right," chattered the brook. "Just look at me. With my water, I revive all who come to me tired and thirsty. And after they have quenched their thirst, they repay me by throwing into my crystal-clear water all kinds of unclean things. You will have to let yourself be throttled by the snake, because here on earth good is always rewarded with evil."

And to the snake, "Go ahead, snake, and throttle the man who saved your life!"

The snake twined itself still tighter around the man's neck, until he almost suffocated. Gasping for breath, he cried, "Don't kill me yet, O snake! Ask a third opinion. Then you may kill me."

"Very well," said the snake, looking at a little squirrel that sat on one of the branches of a tree.

The man also saw the squirrel. "Let us ask him what he thinks," he said to the snake.

"Ask him, then," the snake said, "because I'm in a hurry to throttle you before I take the squirrel as my prey."

"Little squirrel," the man said, "I saved the life of this snake, and now it wants to kill me because, as it says, here on earth good is always rewarded with evil. Is that true?"

The squirrel looked first at the snake and then at the man. "Well, that is very difficult to decide. I ought to see first how the whole thing happened. For I really don't know just how you saved the life of the snake. You must show me that first. Only then can I give you my decision."

"I'll certainly let you see how it went," said the snake.

They all returned to the tree where the man had first seen the snake, and while it crept up the trunk toward the split branch the man took his lance and—struck the snake dead!



AN OLD SUMATRAN LEGEND



HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS of years ago in Sumatra a little village lay on the bank of a swift-flowing river. On the other side of the river was a dense forest, and in the center of this forest lived a tapa or hermit. He was an old man; for many years his home had been a rocky cave hidden under palm leaves. He had lived on the fruits of the trees and the nearby fields, and was friendly with all the animals in the woods, even with the tigers.

But it came to pass that there was a bad drought. The fruits withered on the trees and shrank to dry husks in the fields. The hermit could find nothing to eat, and he couldn't possibly kill any of his animal friends. So, at last, he made himself a small boat out of a tree trunk, rowed across the river, and asked the people of the little village to give him a handful of rice to still his hunger.

They gave him half a coconut-shell full of rice and he thanked them. "Someday I hope to return this rice to you twofold," he said.

The man who had handed it to him laughed. "Never mind," he said. "That won't be necessary."

But when the old hermit came again to ask for a handful



of rice, and when he came still another day for another handful of rice, the villagers began to be annoyed. "We can't give you any more," they said. "We don't have too much to eat ourselves." And the man who had given him the first half a coconut-shell of rice, said crossly, "Why don't you get a rice field for yourself, and then return some of the rice you've borrowed?"

The old hermit turned and left them, still hungry. He sat down on the edge of the river and thought of what the man had said to him.

As he sat there a little boat drew alongside. "Why do you look so pained, old man?" the helmsman leaned out to ask.

"I haven't eaten anything since yesterday," the hermit answered. "And the people of the village, who have been feeding me for a while, have told me they will not give me any more rice." He sighed. "They say that I must begin my own paddy. But how shall I find a suitable place in the forest to plant? And who will give me the young rice stalks to set out? I don't have even a single rice grain."

"That I can give you," the helmsman said. He took up a little bag that lay beside him on the deck. "Cut down some

trees near your hut, and make a paddy in the clearing. If you work hard and take good care of the plants, these grains should bring you luck."

Without another word, the man sprang into his boat and sailed on. The hermit stared at the rice kernels so mysteriously given to him. He tied them in a palm leaf, tucked the leaf in his belt, and rowed back to the other shore. That very day he began to cut down trees, although his hunger made him weak. He started with the trees close to his hut, and kept on chopping until nightfall. Each day, he cut down a few more trees, until finally there was an open space big enough to cultivate as a rice field. All this time he lived on herbs and leaves from the trees.

The fallen trees dried quickly in the hot sun, and when the first rains fell the hermit could start sowing in the loose earth. The young plants, set in neat rows, grew rapidly; the stalks reached upward, the ears formed and turned yellow, and—sooner than usual—the grain was ready to cut.

And now the hermit found, to his amazement, that no matter how much rice he cut in the paddy, it immediately grew again, and there was still the same amount to cut. He was never done.

Delighted that he could give back all the rice he had borrowed, and more too, he got into his little boat and rowed over to the village. He begged the people to come and see his marvelous sawah for themselves. Everyone, he said, should bring a big basket and feel free to fill it with the wonderful rice.

Nobody believed him when he said that no matter how much he cut, new rice grew in its place. Still, they all went across the river, most of them in hollowed-out logs, some swimming, some in little boats; but all of them went. How-

ever, nobody took a basket because nobody thought the hermit was telling the truth.

The villagers followed him to the paddy. The hermit took his knife and cut the fine rice stalks, and instantly, in their place, new ones sprang up, just as full of ripe grains. He did this over and over, moving down the neat rows, almost lost under the towering, waving stalks. Now that they had seen the miracle with their own eyes, the people hurried back to their village to hunt the biggest containers they could find. They snatched up huge baskets woven of bamboo, and enormous water vessels, and any likely looking thing, so that they could bring back as much rice as possible. One man even brought a huge shed, woven of fibers, because he couldn't find a basket that he thought was big enough.

"What are you doing with that shed?" the old hermit asked in astonishment.

"I'm going to fill it with rice, of course," the greedy man replied, and he began to scoop up what the hermit cut.

By the time the shed was filled to the top, no one could possibly move it down to the river's edge. That made the greedy man despair, and the hermit felt sorry for him. So he wove him a stout basket of wood fibers to hold the rice. "Leave the shed here," he said, "as an offering to the gods."

Every day the village people crossed the swift river in their little boats, walked to the paddy, and filled their baskets and vessels to overflowing with the rice that the old hermit cut for them. Finally the tapa grew weary. His back hurt and his arm was tired. He threw down his knife and cried, "Oh, stop growing, you wretched rice!"

No sooner were the words out of his mouth than the beautiful ripe ears of grain withered and sank into the earth; in their place, in the flash of an eye, sprang up the long, sharp

blades of the alang-alang grass. It shot up foot by foot as he watched, and soon the paddy was changed into a wilderness.

Just as this happened, the villagers returned once more with their baskets and jars and vessels. When they saw how the paddy had been transformed, they rushed madly to the shed whose roof they could just glimpse above the tall blades of alang-alang. They fought their way to the shed, because they knew it was filled to the brim with rice as an offering to the gods.

But when they reached it, their cries filled the air. For the big shed and all it contained was now only a towering rock!



THE HOLY MOUNTAIN



THE POWERFUL GIANT who had ruled over Smeru, Indra's holy mountain, ever since the world began had a beautiful daughter whom he loved more than all his other possessions. He loved her so much that he watched over her day and night, and kept her hidden from all eyes. But one morning, when he went to make the rounds of his underground realm, as was his custom, his little daughter had a sudden desire to go and see—just once—how the world outside her father's kingdom looked. And so she left the mountain and went up on the earth.

At first the strong daylight blinded her eyes so that she could not see; but as she grew accustomed to it she gazed around her and she was enchanted with all she saw. She walked on and on, with her light, quick steps. It was almost as if she floated over the beautiful rice fields, and over the lovely meadows where the goats grazed. When she came to a field of grain she suddenly saw a man standing in front of her. He looked somewhat like her father, but he was younger and handsomer than the old mountain giant. And the young man said to her in a soft and friendly voice, "Who are you?"

The young girl had never heard any voice except the loud, rumbling one of her father, and she was so charmed with the

way the young giant said these few simple words that she told him she was Dewi Jurangga, the beloved only child of the mighty giant of the Smeru. She told him, too, that she had left her father's realm for the first time, and that everything she had seen this morning seemed so lovely that she would like to dwell on earth forever, even if she had to give up the immortality of the gods which would have been hers. "Are you one of the gods, or are you a giant?" she asked.

"I am a giant's son," the young man said, "and I am the raksasa or guardian of the great temple of the gods. Brahma himself appointed me. My father is also a great and powerful giant; he is almost as mighty as your father. His name is Bromo." The raksasa went on to tell her that he was on his way to search for a wife. The gods had told him that he would find a beautiful young girl near one of the mountains. "And now I *have* found her!" he cried happily.

But Dewi Jurangga looked at him sadly and shook her head. "I can never be your wife," she said. "You see, my father loves me above everything else. He guards me as the light of his eyes; and he will never, never consent that I be the wife of a raksasa, and certainly not of one who is a son of Bromo."

The raksasa looked at her in astonishment. "Why not?" he asked.

"Because," the young girl answered simply, "your father, Bromo, has sent devastating fires and streams of boiling lava from his mountain to flow over the fertile fields that border on our mountain. In one night he changed them to an arid plain. And that is why my father is an enemy of Bromo."

"Nevertheless, I am going to speak to your father," the raksasa said. And that very day, before the sun went down, he went to Indra's holy mountain and spoke with the mighty

mountain giant, asking if he might have Dewi Jurangga as his wife.

The mountain giant roared with rage that a raksasa should dare speak like that to him; and he roared even louder when Dewi Jurangga said that if her father would not consent to their marriage, she would go to his enemy, Bromo, and throw herself into the pool of fire on his mountain.

But when the mountain giant had roared himself out, he began to fear that, if he refused to let Dewi Jurangga become the raksasa's wife, Bromo might be so angry that he would send more fire and lava over his fertile fields and that he might also take Dewi Jurangga as a sacrifice if she threw herself into the pool of fire.

So he said to the raksasa, "Listen to me, favorite of the great Brahma. Many years ago I promised the gods that my child should be given in marriage only to a being with supernatural powers and strength; no giant's son, but a son of the gods, must be her husband. And, in order that I may know if he is really a son of the gods, he must make a sea of sand around my enemy, Bromo, in one night—that is, between the time the sun sets and the time the first cock crows. It must be a sea of sand a thousand feet deep and a thousand feet wide, so that fire cannot harm my fields any more and so that streams of boiling lava will be quenched in the sand. If you can do that in one night, you may have my daughter as your wife. But if the sea of sand is not finished when the first cock crows, then you shall be turned to stone and you shall remain so for a thousand times a thousand years."

The raksasa thought about this for a while and then he lifted up his head and looked at the lovely face of the giant's daughter and said, "I will try to do this, oh great and mighty

ruler of Indra's holy mountain! Tomorrow evening, when the sun goes down, I will begin my task."

And he said to Dewi Jurangga, "Bring me the very biggest batok (half a coconut-shell) that you can find, and lay it on the spot where we first met."

The following evening, shortly before the sun went down, Dewi Jurangga brought the raksasa the batok. "Do your best," she whispered to him. "Show your power, and we shall be happy forever after."

The raksasa took the batok out of her little hands, and said earnestly, "I will prove myself, kembang manis (lovely flower)."

And as soon as the sun had disappeared below the horizon he began to fill the batok with sand. He threw the sand into piles that became mounds, and mounds that became hills. He scooped up the sand around the mountain Bromo, nor did he pay any attention when Bromo shouted at him and threw red-hot rocks of lava at him. He went right on with his scooping, coconut-shell after coconut-shell full of sand. He worked all night with such furious energy that, when it was almost morning, he had made a sea of sand around Bromo that was nine hundred and ninety feet wide and nine hundred and ninety feet deep.

"Just ten more feet to fill, before the sun comes up," he panted, "and then. . . ." And the raksasa took up his batok again and filled it with sand.

Now the giant of Smeru, Indra's holy mountain, was watching, with his giant's eyes that could pierce the deepest darkness, to see how the raksasa was getting on with his tremendous task. When he realized that the work would be finished before daybreak, and that he would have to give his beloved daugh-



ter to the raksasa, he was beside himself with anger. For, of course, he would have to keep his promise.

Just then the raksasa threw another batok of sand, with a noise like thunder, onto the mounds that were already so high. This made the mountain giant even angrier. "Just a few more feet, and the work will be done," he muttered. "And it is still a long time till daybreak!" Wait. . . . Was that the crow of a cock that he heard? No, it was only his imagination. He heard nothing but the scooping up of sand! But he began to think, what if he himself should imitate the crowing of the cock. After all, it was to save his child! And he was a giant, a demigod; he could do anything he wished.

"Kukeleku," he cried suddenly.

"Kukeleku." the cocks in the various villages answered him.

The cocks had crowed! The day had begun!

And the raksasa, who still had three feet to fill, heard the sound with fear and anger. Furiously he balled his fist; furiously he took the batok filled with sand and threw it from

him. Upside down, with its round part on top, the batok lay in the deep place that he had scooped out around the Bromo; and there it remained forever, as a high mountain, which people called the Batok.

But as soon as the raksasa had thrown down the batok, he heard a penetrating scream. Looking up he saw Dewi Jurangga, staring at him with her great dark eyes, her hair streaming about her. "Kembang Manis! Kembang!" he cried to her sadly. "Lovely flower! All my work has been for nothing!"

But the beautiful young daughter of the mountain giant did not answer him. She had been turned to stone from horror; she had been changed into a mountain. And people called it the Kembang, after the last, loving word that the raksasa had said to her. For he, too, was turned to stone, just as the mountain giant had prophesied he would be if he did not finish his gigantic task before the beginning of the day. He, too, became a mountain—the Segarawedi.

The mountain giant received his punishment, too. In the end, he punished himself. He was so afraid of Brahma's anger that he hid himself in the depths of the Smeru, and there he still sits and sighs and moans over the two lives he ruined so cruelly. With every sigh he expels a heavy cloud of smoke that pushes through the top of the mountain and then spreads over the sky in a beautiful white plume. And the mountain giant must remain there, sighing and moaning and blowing out smoke clouds, until the raksasa, now the Segarawedi, and Dewi Jurangga, now the Kembang, return to their human forms after a thousand times a thousand years; until the mountain Bromo has sunk out of sight, and until the Sand Sea is once more what it was in the beginning.



THE ORIGIN OF THE WATER JARS



RAJAH PAHIT was the son of one of the mightiest rulers of all Java. One day he got into a game of dice and lost his money and his costly ornaments of gold and silver and jewels. The only things he had left were the heirlooms he had inherited from his forebears, and these he had to take to the pawnshop to pay his debts.

Losing his heirlooms, many of which had belonged to his father, made the Rajah despair. He was afraid to tell his father what he had done and so, one night, he fled the kingdom with his wife and little two-year-old daughter. He had no idea where to go, and wandered from place to place until, weary of foot and weary of heart, he settled down on the slope of the mountain Merbabu. There he lived for many years a life of penance, praying and fasting, until Brahma took pity on him.

One evening Rajah Pahit and his wife and their now grown daughter Ruwana were sitting in front of their hut. As always, the Rajah was softly saying his prayers, his head sunk on his chest.

When he ceased praying for a moment, his wife said gently,

"Why don't you rest a while? You have prayed so long. Surely Brahma must hear you soon!"

The Rajah did not look up as his wife spoke to him. He merely shook his snow-white head. The white hair contrasted strangely with his dark skin. Only his deep-set, brilliant eyes showed that he was still a young man.

Now it happened that Brahma, who knows all, knew that the Rajah Pahit was not a wicked man, but had just given in to a momentary weakness. Brahma thought, I will help him; he has suffered enough. The moon was shining brightly, and it occurred to Brahma to call Kajangka, the ruler of the moon, to him. "Take something to Rajah Pahit," he said, "that will make him rich again, so that he can get back all he lost in his game of chance."

Kajangka had no desire to help the people of the earth, but he had to do what Brahma had requested of him. And so, the very next evening, he rode a moonbeam to earth. He set himself down near the top of Merbabu, on a spot where he could just see the bamboo hut of Rajah Pahit. And as he glanced through an opening in one of the bamboo walls, he saw the lovely Ruwana, a maiden as beautiful and radiant as the sun.

No sooner had he seen Ruwana than he desired her as his bride. Swiftly he changed himself into a handsome young man, went into the hut, and asked Rajah Pahit to give him his daughter in marriage.

"I am only a poor exile," Rajah Pahit said haughtily, "but, after all, I am not going to give my daughter to someone who is of a lower caste than myself."

"I do not belong to a lower caste," Kajangka said. "I have been sent by Brahma. It is his desire that you become rich so that you can buy back all the heirlooms that you had to



pawn. Listen!" He leaned close. "The Creator kneaded the sun from a pile of clay. From what was left over, he kneaded the moon. But just before he began to knead the moon, I—who had not yet drunk of the life-water and was only a mortal wandering on the earth—I took a piece of this clay and buried it in Merbabu, the very mountain on which you're living. Now if you will promise to give me your lovely daughter in marriage, I will teach you the art of pottery-making!"

"Why should I learn pottery-making?" Rajah Pahit asked.

"So that you can become rich," Kajangka answered impatiently. "So that you can buy back all the heirlooms you had to pawn. I will teach you to make pottery of a most special kind and shape. You shall make the pottery out of this unusual clay, that I have buried here in the mountain, and because it's the same clay out of which the moon was kneaded, the pottery will be rare and costly."

Rajah Pahit gave his lovely daughter Ruwana to the ruler of the moon, and in return Kajangka taught him pottery-making. The clay was inexhaustible, it seemed, and of a pecul-

iar whiteness. Kajangka decided that it should be made into big water jars. Rajah Pahit helped him, and he was so clever and quick that he learned pottery-making in one night.

Soon they had made so many water jars that the top of Merbabu and even the tops of some smaller mountains nearby were covered with them.

"What a quantity of water jars we have!" Kajangka cried to his father-in-law one day. "I think we really ought to build a wall around the tops of the mountains, because you never can tell who might see these beautiful water jars and steal them from us."

"That's a good idea," Rajah Pahit said. "We'll begin at once."

They started to build a bamboo wall on the tops of the mountains, so that the water jars would be hidden from view, and only the gods could see them from their heaven.

Three mountain tops had been ringed with walls when suddenly there was a violent thunderstorm, just above Merbabu. Rajah Pahit left his work and fled to his hut, and Kajangka flew to the moon. After a while, when the storm had abated somewhat and the two potters wanted to return to their work, they saw, to their horror, that all the water jars had disappeared from the mountains that had not yet been fenced in at the top.

"No doubt they flew away because they were afraid of the lightning," Rajah Pahit surmised. "But where in the world could they be?"

"I don't know," Kajangka said. "But I do know that this must be a sign from Brahma. He is telling us that all the water jars that remain must be sold. And I must go back to the gods' heaven, but I will take my wife with me."

At first Rajah Pahit grumbled at that, for he knew how

much he would miss his lovely daughter. But then he began selling the handsome water jars, and soon he had so much money that he could buy back his costly heirlooms, and return to his own kingdom, and his grief over the loss of his daughter lessened. For he knew now that Ruwana had a good life with Kajangka; he knew that because, when the moon was full, he could see her laughing face.

But what happened to the water jars that disappeared?

Well, it's true that they fled because they were afraid of the lightning. They not only fled from Java, but they flew as far away as the island of Borneo. There they buried themselves deep in the dense and ancient forests. Surely, they thought, no mortal could ever find them now.

However, the legend tells us, they *were* found, centuries later by the natives of Borneo. And when the Dyaks learned that these jars had been made of clay from which the sun and the moon had been kneaded, they were overjoyed, for they realized that to have a jar of such supernatural origin in one's house would be a piece of wonderful good fortune. Sickness and evil spirits would be banished from the neighborhood of a house containing one of these jars.

And even today, having a jar of that kind in the house is of the greatest importance. Not only does its presence banish sickness and evil spirits, but it brings luck at harvest time and in fishing, and it blesses a marriage.

The buying of a water jar, then, is an event to be celebrated. In a house where a new water jar has been acquired, there is feasting for seven days and seven nights. The Dyak priestesses sing and dance. And seven little figures, carved of ironwood, are set up at the doorway and remain there seven months, so that whoever passes by may know that the people who live in that house have bought a new water jar.



THE THREE COMPANIONS



EVERY YEAR Cholera made a visit to the Holy City of Mecca. Her companions were always Death and Fear. One year it happened that Fear came before Death and Cholera, and the gatekeeper, who did not know her, let her go into the city.

When the other two appeared before the gate of the Holy City, the watchman called angrily, "So! You come again to bring sorrow and misery, do you? And how many victims are you going to take this time, cursed Cholera?"

"Don't carry on so," Cholera said easily. "I imagine I won't take more than five hundred."

"And you, dread Death," the gatekeeper cried, turning to her. "How many people are you going to take out of the Holy City to your kingdom?"

"Oh, I'll take whatever Cholera gives me," Death answered quietly.

"Well," the gatekeeper muttered, "go in. But watch out, Cholera, that you take no more than five hundred victims! You promised! And you, Death, don't you dare to take more than Cholera gives you!"

"Gatekeeper," they said together, "you can rely on our

word." And side by side they passed through the opened gate and into the Holy City.

Long weeks they remained in the city, and then they called to the gatekeeper to open the gates again.

"Hmm," the gatekeeper muttered, "how many victims do you take, Cholera?"

"I did my best not to go beyond the promised number," Cholera answered. "And so I am taking no more than four hundred and ninety."

"Now, that sounds as if you're speaking the truth," the gatekeeper decided. He turned toward Death. "And you, Death, how many are you taking with you?"

"Oh, I am taking more than a thousand with me," Death answered at once.

The gatekeeper was horrified. "How can that be?" he cried in astonishment. "Cholera herself said she is taking only four hundred and ninety!"

"Yes," Death answered, "that is what Cholera is taking. But most of those who died were taken by Fear, who came unnoticed through your gate. One day you will know, old man, that our sister Fear does more harm and causes more deaths than Cholera!"



FIRE, WATER, AND HONOR



ONCE UPON A TIME Fire, Water, and Honor were going on a journey together. They wanted to see something more of the world than the high mountains and the old cities full of temples and the palm trees.

While they were walking, and talking of this and that, the question came up of how they would ever find each other again if one of them should happen to be lost.

"Why, that would be easy enough," Fire said. "After all, wherever you see smoke spiraling in the air, there you will find me."

"And I," Water said. "could be found easily, too. Wherever there are seas and rivers, brooks and ponds, there I will be." They turned toward Honor. "And where would you be found, good friend?"

"I think," Honor said slowly, "that you would never be able to find me again once you had lost me."

The two others would not believe that. So they talked of other things as they walked along. Soon they came to a cross-roads. Fire went to the right, Water to the left, and Honor—Honor suddenly disappeared.

In his wanderings, Fire came to the house of a mortal. There Water finally found him, and as soon as he found him he almost extinguished Fire. Fire was so glad to see his friend again that he cried, "Now let us take to the road again and find Honor!"

A little bit of Fire, which had not been put out by Water, went with Water in search of their friend, Honor. They searched for him in the villages and in the towns, and when they could not find him there, they went to the high mountains and to the deep valleys, and when they did not find him there, they went to the seas and to the rivers.

"We've looked everywhere—except in the forests," Water said to Fire.

"You're right," Fire answered. "Well, then, let's search for him in the forests."

So they went to the dark, thick forests and searched for Honor among the great trees, in the dim, frightening light. In the middle of one of these forests lived a hermit who was blind. Fire and Water hunted up this old man and asked him if, at some time or other, he had ever met Honor in the woods.

"Honor?" the hermit repeated. "Why are you hunting for him?"

"Well," Fire said, "we—Water and I—started on a journey with him, and on the way somehow we lost him. So we have taken to the road again to find him."

The blind old hermit shook his head sadly. "You lost Honor on your journey," he said. "And whoever loses Honor shall never find him again. For you see, Honor is like the light of a man's eyes. That, too, you never get back once you have lost it."

Now, for the first time, Fire and Water believed the words

that Honor had spoken to them so long ago. They knew that it was useless to hunt further, and they returned to the home of the mortal. There Fire burned, and Water evaporated. And that, says the story, is because they had lost Honor and could never find him again.



THE SAGA OF THE WARU WANGGI



BEHIND A CERTAIN VILLAGE in Java there stands a mountain, and on this mountain grows a tree called the waru. From the wood of this tree the natives cut their lance shafts, and a Javanese man holds the waru tree in great esteem because he believes that if his lance has a shaft of the waru wood he will have no trouble in overcoming his enemies. The reason he believes this is told in a very old story.

The name of the mountain meant "fragrant"—that is, a place with an air of holiness about it. And men called the mountain holy because in its caverns lived many hermits.

Among these hermits were some who possessed supernatural powers. One of the hermits was a very old and pious and wise man. They called him Kawitjaksana which means "hermit full of wisdom." People came from far places to hear his words, and ask for his advice because it was always good.

The old man lived in poverty. He wore a garment woven of bark, tied around his waist with strong plant fibers, and he ate only the fruits and herbs that he found in the woods and on the mountain. When he had fasted two days and was almost a skeleton, he would fast still a third and even a fourth day. Moreover, he lived like a hermit: He did not speak with

the other hermits, but only to Brahma, the Creator, and with the people who came to him for advice on matters that troubled them.

The other hermits, many of whom did not lead pious lives, after a time became jealous of the way people preferred this kindly, simple man to themselves. In their unreasoning jealousy they plagued the gentle, grey-haired tapa in all kinds of evil ways; finally the poor old man could not come outside his cave without being hit by rotten fruit and wounded by stones thrown by the other hermits.

This went on for a long time. Still the old hermit did not moan over his lot, nor did he protest that people of his own caste were making life unbearable for him. The tapa did not ask for help from any of the gods nor from Brahma, the Creator.

It happened that at this time no waru trees grew on the holy mountain. It was bare except for great stones, and its sides were cleft by deep fissures and caves, and the nearest village was far away. That was why the villagers had no idea of what the poor old hermit had to endure.

It came to pass that the hermit, having fasted for two days, was driven by hunger to come out of his cave to hunt for something to eat. As he was walking feebly along a ravine, where he was accustomed to gathering roots and herbs, some of the other hermits saw him. At a sign from one of the most villainous, they fell upon the pious man and rushed him toward the edge of the ravine, to throw him down onto the sharp, pointed stones that lay at the bottom.

The tapa knew that his enemies wanted to kill him, and that he would surely die if they threw him over the cliff.

He had never asked anything of Brahma but now he sent



up a fervent prayer to the Creator to give him a sign, something that might save him from his enemies.

Even as he prayed, an enormous snake fell at the feet of the hermits. At first they shrank back, frightened, but when they saw what it was, they cried, "Oh, it's only a snake! What do we have to fear from a snake? If it's a poisonous one, it can't harm us—we're holy men!" With that they grabbed the old tapa and pushed him closer to the edge of the cliff.

At that instant the snake, sent by Brahma, flung up its head and planted its tail in the loose earth so that it stood upright between the pious tapa and his enemies.

They fell back in astonishment, and before their eyes the snake began to change into a tree. The head split into many branches, and each drop of the snake's venom became thick leaves. When the hermits saw this, they understood at last

the power of the wise old tapa. They bowed low before him, then one of them rose and cut a branch from the tree, fashioning it into a lance shaft which he presented to the grey-haired tapa, saying, "May the lance which this shaft shall hold kill all of us, if we ever forget to honor you as the bravest, wisest and mightiest of hermits!"

Now, as the man spoke these words, another miracle took place. For as soon as the old tapa grasped the shaft, it suddenly acquired a fine-pointed lance. The other hermits bowed still lower in homage before their mighty brother, and they cried, "Now we have seen that you are high, high above us, that you are truly one of Brahma's chosen!"

And even now, after all this time, when new waru trees rise from the earth on the holy mountain, people greet their appearance with joy because they know that they have grown out of the snake that Brahma sent to save the life of Kawitjaksana.

That is why the Javanese still say that lance shafts cut from the wood of the waru wanggi can do wonderful things, especially if carried in battle. For whoever carries a lance with a shaft of waru wood will surely overcome all his enemies.



THE DECISION



IN THE LONG AGO DAYS when animals could talk, a boar and an antelope were friends. They had not seen each other for some time when they met one day and the boar said, "I'm sorry to tell you, but you are going to be eaten by me."

The antelope started in surprise. "But how can that be?" he asked in puzzlement. "We have always been friends. Why should you suddenly want to eat me?"

"It isn't that I want to," the boar replied, "but I dreamed that I would eat you, so it must be so."

The antelope thought this over. "I see what you mean, but I should like to put the question to the king. After all, such a thing should not happen without the king's approval. Do you agree?"

"Let us go," the boar answered. "I know I am right, but I am willing to let the king hear the case."

So they went along the road together to the king's palace. Now they did not know that an ape had been sitting in a tree while they talked, and had heard everything. Out of curiosity he went along, too—leaping from tree branch to tree branch very quietly. They did not know he was keeping pace

with them, and when they reached the king, who was holding court out of doors, the ape hid himself in a tall tree, the better to see and hear.

"I have come, O king," the antelope said, "because my friend the boar tells me that he will have to eat me."

The king looked from one to the other. "And you are his *friend*?" he asked the boar.

"True," the boar replied.

"Then why must you eat your friend?"

"Because I dreamed it," the boar answered, "and if I dreamed it, it must come to pass."

The king said thoughtfully, "Yes, that is so. If you dreamed it, it must come to pass. It is unfortunate, but there is nothing I can do."

There was a sudden rustling in the tree above them, and the ape made a flying leap to the ground, landing almost at the feet of the king.

The king was startled and angry. "What do you mean, frightening us like that? What are you doing here, ape?"

The ape answered promptly, "Well, I dreamed that I was to marry your daughter, O king, so I have come to get her."

The king rose from his chair. "Begone! How dare you say a thing like that?"

"I dreamed it. I am to marry your daughter."

"It is impossible!" The king shouted so loudly that the leaves shook on the trees. "I will not hear of it! It is impossible, I say!"

"No," the ape returned calmly, "it is possible. Have you not just said that the antelope must be eaten by the boar because the boar dreamed it? If that is possible, then it is possible that I will marry your daughter because I dreamed it."

The king sat down again, and was silent for a long time.



They could tell that he was thinking. Everyone waited for his words . . . but, most of all, the antelope waited.

Then the king held up his hand. "Let it be known, everywhere and at once, that the decision I rendered cannot be carried out. The antelope will not be eaten by the boar. For now I have learned that the possible can be impossible, and the impossible remains impossible, whether one dreams it or not."



THREE TALES OF THE MOUSE-DEER



ONE OF THE FAVORITE animals in Indonesia is the delicate little mouse-deer, or kanchil. He is so tiny and quick and alert that people have made him the hero of any number of stories. Here are three of them. The first one is from Java.

1

It was a hot day in the forest and the kantjil had just found a quiet shady spot for a rest when he heard a tiger approaching. He knew that the tiger would want to kill and eat him, and he had to think fast. When the tiger poked his head through the tall grasses, the mouse-deer was fanning a pile of rotting leaves with a large palm leaf.

The tiger was curious and came closer. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"I am guarding the king's food," the mouse-deer answered. "This is very special food, and only for the king. I have to take good care of it."

"Royal food!" the tiger cried. "I should like to taste it."

"Oh, that's impossible," the kanchil said, fanning busily

to keep the flies off. "Only the king may eat of this food."

"But couldn't I try it just once?"

The kanchil shook his head.

"Just one bite?" the tiger begged. "I'm hungry, but I promise to take only one bite."

"Well"—the mouse-deer pretended to think hard—"maybe—just one bite." The tiger came closer. "No, no! Wait! You mustn't taste it till I've gone. After all, I feel badly about betraying my trust. I was to guard this food for the king. And I wouldn't want any blame to attach to me."

The tiger nodded, his eyes on the king's food. He began to lick his lips.

"Wait till I give you the word," the kanchil insisted, and the tiger promised.

The mouse-deer ran swiftly into the forest, and when he was a safe distance from the tiger he called, "You may taste it now!"

The tiger fell upon the royal food. One bite—and he discovered that it wasn't something special and delicious. It was only rotting leaves. He spat it out, and with a mighty growl he started after the mouse-deer. "I'll get you!" he shouted. "Wait till I find you! I'll tear you into bits!"

The mouse-deer, meanwhile, had scurried on, hunting safety. But there was no place to hide, and he knew he would have to rely on his wits. So he searched till he found a great snake, coiled up asleep, and sat down beside it. He had no sooner sat down than he heard the tiger crashing through the trees, growling as he came.

"You miserable wretch!" the tiger snarled, showing his red gums and his sharp white teeth. "I'll eat you alive! Fooling me like that!"

"But I didn't fool you," the kanchil said innocently. "I told

you not to eat it. I told you it was the king's food and that I was not supposed to let anyone have it! But you insisted."

"The awful stuff!" the tiger muttered, shaking his great head from side to side. "I can't get the taste out of my mouth. You'll pay for this!"

"You mustn't blame *me*," the kanchil cried. "I warned you. But do keep quiet. I'm guarding the king's girdle."

The tiger came closer. "What's so wonderful about that?" he asked, peering at the coiled snake.

"It's the king's girdle," the kanchil repeated. "And I feel honored that he trusts me to guard it."

"Why?"

"Because it's full of magic power," the mouse-deer said, with an important air. "Whoever wears it can have whatever he wishes. So of course only the king may wear it."

The tiger's eyes grew bright. "Magic power! *I* have a wish that I'd like to have granted. Let me try it on . . . just once, just for a moment."

"Oh, I couldn't do that!" the mouse-deer said in a shocked voice.

"The king need never know," the tiger wheedled. "Just let me have it for a moment."

"Well"—the mouse-deer pretended to be reluctant—"perhaps just for a moment. . . ." But as the tiger came closer he cried, "No, no! Wait! You mustn't try it on till I have gone. For, of course, no blame must attach to me, and I must not see you pick it up."

"Well, get on, then," the tiger said impatiently. "I can scarcely wait to get my wish."

The mouse-deer leaped nimbly through the forest and when he was a long distance away he called back, "Now you may try it on!"

The tiger eagerly tried to pick up what he thought was the magic girdle, but as soon as he touched it the snake woke with a hiss and bit the tiger while it wound itself around his body.

The tiger, taken by surprise, had to fight hard to loosen the coils of the angry snake, and it was only after a long, hard struggle that he was able to kill it.

Now he was so furious that he could scarcely see. He charged through the jungle to find the mouse-deer. "I'll have my revenge!" he shouted and all the jungle creatures shook to hear his bellow. "Wait till I find you, kanchil! I'll make you sorry you ever tried to trick me!"

The mouse-deer heard him and trembled where he sat, half-hidden near a tall clump of bamboo. Before the tiger could open his mouth, the kanchil said, in a joyful voice, "Oh, there you are again! Look, I've been appointed to take care of the king's trumpet! A wonderful instrument!"

"What's so wonderful about it?" the tiger muttered, coming closer. He was still smarting with anger, and his wounds hurt.

"Oh, I've never tried it, of course," the kanchil said hurriedly. "It's much too fine for anyone like me. But I've been told," he said, lowering his voice, "that if you put your tongue between these"—he waved toward two of the tallest bamboos—"and wait till the wind blows, they give out the most beautiful music!"

"That sounds interesting," the tiger mumbled. "I've always fancied myself as a musician. I'd like to try it."

"But not anyone can play it!" the mouse-deer said, horrified. "It's the king's trumpet, don't you understand? Only the king can play it. And he has set me to guard it for him."

"Nonsense," said the tiger. "How will he ever know? I'm sure I could play it."

"Well," the mouse-deer said slowly, "If you want to try. . .

But I would feel dreadful if anything happened to the royal instrument. So you must promise to let me get safely away before you begin. I wouldn't want any blame to attach to me."

"Hurry up, then," the tiger said, his eyes fastened on what he thought was the king's trumpet. "What did you say I must do?"

"Put your tongue between the two tallest reeds. And be sure to wait till the wind blows!"

The mouse-deer scurried away. The tiger, his eyes aglitter, put his tongue between the two tall bamboos which grew very close together, and waited. And after a while a strong gust of wind came, and shook the bamboos, and the tiger let out a cry of rage and pain. For his tongue, caught between the reeds, had been pinched off!

Now he bellowed with fury and bounded through the jungle to find the mouse-deer. He tore through the underbrush, hardly able to see for pain. At last he found the kanchil standing beside a great wasp's nest. He tried to say, "What are you doing?"

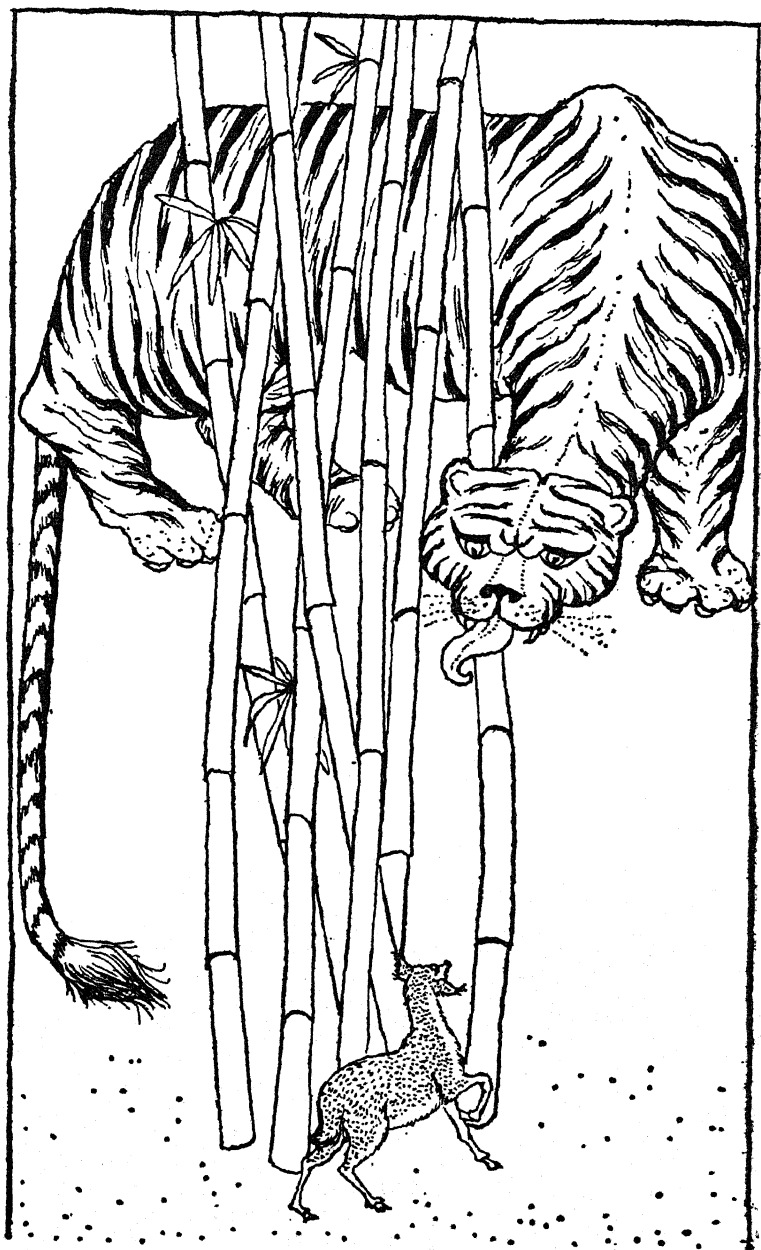
The mouse-deer said, "I can't understand you. . . . Oh, you mean, what am I doing here? I'm guarding the king's drum. Isn't it beautiful? And strange-looking, too. Of course, it *would* be strange-looking. It's not an ordinary drum, you see. It's a magic drum. And only the king may play it."

The tiger made gurgling sounds and the mouse-deer said, "You mean, you want to try it?"

The tiger nodded, his eyes blood-red.

"I don't think I could let you do that." The mouse-deer acted as if he were thinking hard. "It wouldn't be right."

But as the tiger came closer and he could feel the hot breath on his face, he said, "Well. . . . You might try it, just once. But only if you let me get away from here first. I've been set to



guard this wonderful drum, and I wouldn't want any blame to attach to me in case something happened to it."

The tiger nodded, and the kanchil started to run. "Just strike it once," he said. "When I give you the word. It has such a wonderful tone that no one could bear to hear it more than once."

The tiger was impatient. "All right, I'm going," the mouse-deer said hurriedly, and he leaped away through the underbrush. When he was safely out of sight he called, "Now!"

And the tiger struck the nest with his great paw. A cloud of wasps, angry at being disturbed, flew out and swarmed around his head. They stung him on the nose and the ears and on the sides and on his legs; they even stung his tail. The tiger ran madly through the jungle, blind with rage and pain. He ran and ran until he found a pool of water; he plunged in it and was never seen again.

The mouse-deer lay under a palm tree and fanned himself. "Well," he sighed, "it was hard, but it was worth it. I may be small, but I'm clever. Now *he*'ll never bother me any more."

2

This tale comes from Borneo.

"I am going fishing," the mouse-deer said one day.

"I'd like to go along," the tortoise said, creeping up.

"And I," said the ape.

"May I go, too?" the elephant begged. "I've always wanted to go fishing."

The mouse-deer said they might all accompany him, and they trooped through the jungle to the river. Between them they caught a great many fish—too many to eat right away, and the mouse-deer decided that they ought to smoke some of the fish, in case they got hungry later in the season.

They built a big fire on the banks of the river and smoked most of the fish they had caught. Next day they decided to go fishing again, but the mouse-deer said, "Somebody has to stay here while we're away, to watch the drying fish."

"Very well," said the elephant. "I'll stay. No one would dare to steal our fish while I'm on guard."

So the elephant stayed behind. But while he was sitting near the drying fish there was a great crashing in the jungle and out walked an enormous giant who came up, ate the fish, and walked off again. The elephant was so frightened that he could do nothing, and when the others came back he told them what had happened.

"You were certainly a fine guard!" his companions jeered. "Do you mean to say you let that giant steal our fish without so much as saying a word?"

"If you had *seen* him—" the elephant began. But the others laughed, though they were upset because their fish had been stolen, and all their work had gone for nothing. They had a big catch again this evening, so they decided to have a nice supper, and smoke the rest of the fish to take home with them. When the fish were drying next morning they set off, but first they voted that the ape should stay behind to guard their store.

The ape climbed a tree where he could see over the landscape. It was quiet and peaceful and he had almost fallen asleep when suddenly there was a tremendous noise and through the underbrush came the giant who walked up to the pile of drying fish, ate them all, and went away.

The ape was so terrified he could not let out even a small screech, and he was still twittering with fear when the others returned with another fine catch of fish.

When the rest of the party heard what had happened, they were angry. "Somebody has got to stop this thief," they said.

It was the tortoise who volunteered to stay this time. "I'll keep an eye on our fish," he said. "No one will be able to get close enough to eat them."

But watch though he did, never closing an eye, he could not prevent the giant from consuming all their fish again that day.

"This has got to stop," the mouse-deer said. "None of you knows what to do. I'm surprised at you. Now it's my turn. I should have stayed the very first day; then nothing like this would have happened."

In spite of their worry and fear, the other animals laughed at the boasting of the little mouse-deer. "If we couldn't stop the giant, what do you think *you* could do?" they taunted. "You're so small, how do you think you could get the better of him?"

"I don't know, but I think I could," the mouse-deer said. "Anyhow, let's dry the fish again, and I'll stay tomorrow while you go fishing. We must have something to take home with us."

As soon as the fishermen had left the next morning, the mouse-deer hunted up four stout posts which he set into the ground. Then he searched for some rattan and wove the strands into four strong rings. It wasn't long before there was a crashing and thrashing in the jungle, and the giant appeared again. The mouse-deer kept right on working, plaiting the rattan into rings.

The giant was very curious. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"Oh, I have some friends who suffer from bad pains in their backs," the mouse-deer said, never looking up. "I know a remedy for pains in the back and I am making it now."

"Very interesting," said the giant in a voice that fairly shook the earth. "Very interesting. You see, I suffer from pains in the back, myself. Do you think you could cure me?"

"I'm sure I could. This remedy never fails," the mouse-deer said. He stood up. "Go over there and lie down."

The giant lay down on the earth. "Now put your elbows close to your sides, and pull your knees up to your chest," said the mouse-deer.

The giant did so. "What are you going to do now?"

"I'll massage you," the mouse-deer said, "and put on the cure."

He ran around the giant and slipped the rattan rings over his arms and legs and pulled them tight. Then he fastened the rings to the strong posts. The giant began to eye the mouse-deer warily. "Are you sure you know what you're doing?"

"Yes, indeed. Wait just a minute and you'll see," the mouse-deer replied, and walked away.

The giant tried to get up to go after him, but he could not rise. The more he struggled, the tighter he drew the rattan bonds and they held him fast. He shouted and growled and rumbled and roared, but he could not break loose.

When the fishermen came back, bringing the biggest catch they had ever had, they found the little mouse-deer sitting quietly beside a tree, with the bound and furious giant lying near him, still struggling.

Now that the giant was trapped they had no trouble in killing him. They all marveled at the mouse-deer's feat. "How did you ever do it?" they asked.

"Well," the mouse-deer said, "when you're small and weak, you have to use your brain."

3

One day a mouse-deer was running through the forest when he fell into a deep pit that was covered over with leaves. He struggled mightily to climb up the muddy sides of the pit, only to fall back again to the bottom. He leaped into the air until

he was exhausted. In despair, he crouched in a corner, trying to think what he could do.

Just then an elephant came by and peered into the pit. "Why, what are you doing down there?" he asked in surprise.

The mouse-deer said quickly, "Oh, I got word that the sky will soon fall, and that all the creatures in the forest will be crushed to death. So I climbed down here to save myself."

"The sky's going to fall?" the elephant repeated in alarm.

The mouse-deer nodded. "And all of you will be crushed to death."

"When will it happen?" the elephant asked.

"Very soon now."

"Let me come down there with you," the elephant begged.

"I don't want to be killed."

The mouse-deer appeared to think this over. "There's scarcely room for you—and me," he said finally. "But I feel sorry for you. Come on down."

The elephant thanked him heartily and crashed clumsily into the pit, while the mouse-deer cowered in a corner. When the elephant was safely down, the nimble mouse-deer sprang onto his back and was so close to the top of the pit that with one leap he was over the edge and on his way.

Finally the kanchil came to a river, but he discovered that it was too deep and broad for him to cross because he could neither wade nor swim. He thought hard, for he *must* get across the river.

Standing on the riverbank, he had an idea. He called loudly for all the crocodiles to come together. The oldest crocodile said, "Why?"

"Because the king has sent me as his messenger. He said that all the crocodiles in the river must be counted."

The oldest crocodile told the others and they began to come

together in one spot. They came by twos and threes and fours, by tens and dozens.

When they were all assembled the mouse-deer said importantly, "Now line up in a row from bank to bank, so that I can count you."

The crocodiles meekly ranged themselves in a row that extended from one bank of the river to the other, and the little mouse-deer leaped on the first crocodile's back. "One!" he shouted. He jumped on the back of the second crocodile. "Two!" he cried. And so he went, from one to the other, counting as he jumped . . . until he came safely to the other side of the river.

"What foolish creatures you are," he teased, "to believe everything you hear, and to do as anyone says!"

They were angry, but the oldest crocodile was more than angry. He was determined to have revenge on the tricky little mouse-deer. So he bided his time and when, at last, the mouse-deer came down to the river's edge to get a drink, the oldest crocodile was waiting for him and grabbed one of the kanchil's legs in his mouth.

The mouse-deer thought swiftly. He picked up a branch from the bank and said, "That's not my leg you have—that's a stick of wood. My foot is here!"

The crocodile let go of the mouse-deer's leg and grabbed the piece of wood, and the clever mouse-deer bounded away like a streak of lightning, while the crocodile gazed stupidly at the piece of wood in his mouth.

He was cross at being fooled. "I'll lie in wait for him," he vowed, "and make him sorry he tricked me." He lay in the water, half-submerged and very quiet, so that he would look like a water-soaked log. He knew that the mouse-deer would have to come down to the river again to drink.

And after a while the mouse-deer came. He stood on the edge of the river and looked toward the crocodile. He would never be able to drink while the crocodile was there. So he said loudly, "That may be a log . . . and then again, it may be a crocodile."

The oldest crocodile remained motionless.

"Of course," the kanchil said, just as loudly, "if it's a crocodile it will float downstream."

The crocodile was determined not to give himself away, so he scarcely breathed. He was very, very still.

"But," the mouse-deer called, "if it's a log, it will float upstream."

At that the crocodile began to swim against the current, and the mouse-deer burst into laughter.

"Stupid one!" he cried. "I've fooled you again! Now I can have my drink in peace."



WHY THE WARINGEN TREE IS HOLY



THERE WAS ONCE A KING who ruled over one of the mightiest kingdoms in Java. He had many children by his many wives. The oldest son was called Jamojaja, and he was as handsome as one of the gods, as slender as a palm tree, as quick and nimble as a young deer, as strong and courageous as the royal tiger. But he was also as gentle as a wood dove, and as true as a horse of the noblest blood, so he was greatly loved by all the king's subjects. Whenever the prince appeared they applauded him joyfully, and they bent the knee to him and obeyed his slightest command as if he were one of the gods.

Among all these people there was only one who hated him, and that was Dewi Andana, the second wife of the king. She, too, had a son, and so there was envy in her heart, for she knew that someday Prince Jamojaja would succeed his father on the throne, and then she and her children would be sent out of the kingdom. And the king was very old, she said to herself, and she herself was much more beautiful than the king's first wife.

Dewi Andana was beautiful, much more beautiful than any

of the other wives of the king. But she was also the most cunning of them all. She would wind her slim, velvet-soft arms around her husband's neck, her dark eyes would gaze at him admiringly, and she would dance toward him with his golden sirih set; so that, more and more, the king found himself under her spell. He gave her the costly ornaments and the fine silks for which she asked him in her gentle, flattering voice.

One day when the king was with Dewi Andana, he said to her, "Would my beloved one like to have the bracelet of gold with the red and green jewels that the Arab merchant showed her yesterday?" But Dewi Andana shook her dark head, and whispered in the king's ear, "No, my king, today I do not desire any costly ornament. I ask only that you grant me one wish!"

"And what is the wish of my most beautiful wife?" asked the king.

"My wish," she answered him slowly, "is that our son, Raden Samijan, shall someday rule over this kingdom."

"But that is impossible, as long as Jamojaja lives!" the king cried. "And what would his mother, the queen, say if the son of my second wife should succeed me?"

"But am I not the first wife of your heart?" Dewi Andana asked in her soft voice.

"Yes, you are the first wife of my heart," he answered.

"Well, then," she went on, "why don't you send your son Jamojaja to the mountains? Tell him that he must stay there forever because his life is in danger here—that some of your subjects want to poison him. Then he will be afraid and go away. . . . For if he stays here," she said, "perhaps someday the people will demand that you give up your throne before your back is bent and your muscles are weakened. Then Jamojaja will rule over us, your wives will be banished, and never more

will you see your beloved wife, Dewi Andana. Think this over well, my husband."

And the king, the great ruler who had never been afraid before his worst enemies, he who had caught more than fifty arrows in his hand, who, with sword and lance and sometimes with his kris alone had killed the deadliest tigers, he the strong, the courageous, stood now with fear in his heart before the lovely young woman. He bowed his head and said to her, "It shall be as my most beloved wife wishes. My son Jamojaja shall be banished from my kingdom. And after my death Samijan, the son of my most beloved wife, shall rule over this realm."

That very evening the king ordered Jamojaja and his nobles to come before him, and when they had come, the king told them that he had decided to banish the prince to the mountains because he understood that there were people who wanted to kill him.

Jamojaja begged, "Let me stay here, Father! I am not afraid of death."

But the king said, "It is my desire that you obey my wish, my son."

And with these words the fate of Jamojaja was sealed.

The nobles and all the other courtiers were very sad that the prince, who was so good and handsome, was to be banished. But the saddest of all was Dewi Kesumo, the young and beautiful wife of Jamojaja. Jamojaja said to her, "Kesumo, joy of my life, it is the will of my father that I go away from here. I could set myself against his will and say, 'I shall remain in the kingdom where I shall rule after your death.' But if I did that, I would be going against the adat, the custom, which demands of us, as children, that we obey our parents. And you, Kesumo, what will you do?"

"I will do just as your father wishes," the young woman said in her gentlest voice. "I will follow you to the mountains, my prince. And neither you nor I will murmur or complain, nor will we ask, 'Why may we not stay in the kingdom of our father?' No, my husband, we will bow before your father's will, as the palm tree bows before the fury of the hurricane. Whatever happens, we will remain together."

"And your parents, my sweet wife, what will they say if you go with me to the mountains?" asked the prince. "Will they not sorrow for their daughter?"

"Kesumo will not listen to the sorrow of her parents," answered the princess. "She will listen only to the voice of her husband as it cries to her. She will follow him along the roads where the rough stones will wound her feet. She will feed on the fruits that grow in the woods, and the mountain springs will quench her thirst."

"And when you are tired, and the sun burns the grass underfoot?" asked the prince.

"Then we will rest under the palm trees in the forest," answered the princess, "and the rustle of their leaves will sing us to sleep."

"Then, my beloved, follow me to the mountains," the prince said.

While Jamojaja and his wife sat talking, a dark form crept into the sleeping room of the prince. It was Dewi Andana. She was afraid that the king would regret his decision to send his oldest son into exile. Then her son would not succeed to the throne. And that must be! That must be! Her son must become king of this mighty realm! She thought, too, that if Jamojaja should die he would never be able later on to come back and claim the throne from her son. So she decided to put him to death. She put a few drops of a strong, but slow-work-

ing, poison into the prince's water jug which stood on a mat near the bed, and then she disappeared as quietly as she had come.

That night the prince drank from the water jug as he always did, and the next morning when he woke up and rose from his bed, he felt faint and dizzy. But he did not say anything about it, not even to his wife.

Two days later Jamojaja and the princess left the palace and started for the mountains, without taking even one servant with them. Although the prince began to feel more and more ill, he walked courageously beside his young wife. But one very warm day, as they came to a deep ravine, he found that he could go no farther. He fell to the ground and lay there panting, "My lovely Kesumo, I am dying. . . ."

The poor little princess was crazed with grief. She knelt by her dying husband, took his cold hands in her own warm ones, and lifted her tear-filled eyes to the heavens. "Oh, great good spirits," she prayed, "please help me! Save my beloved husband!"

No sooner had Dewi Kesumo said this, than out of the heavens appeared Kama Jaja, the protector of married people. He came to the spot where the prince lay and bent over the dying man.

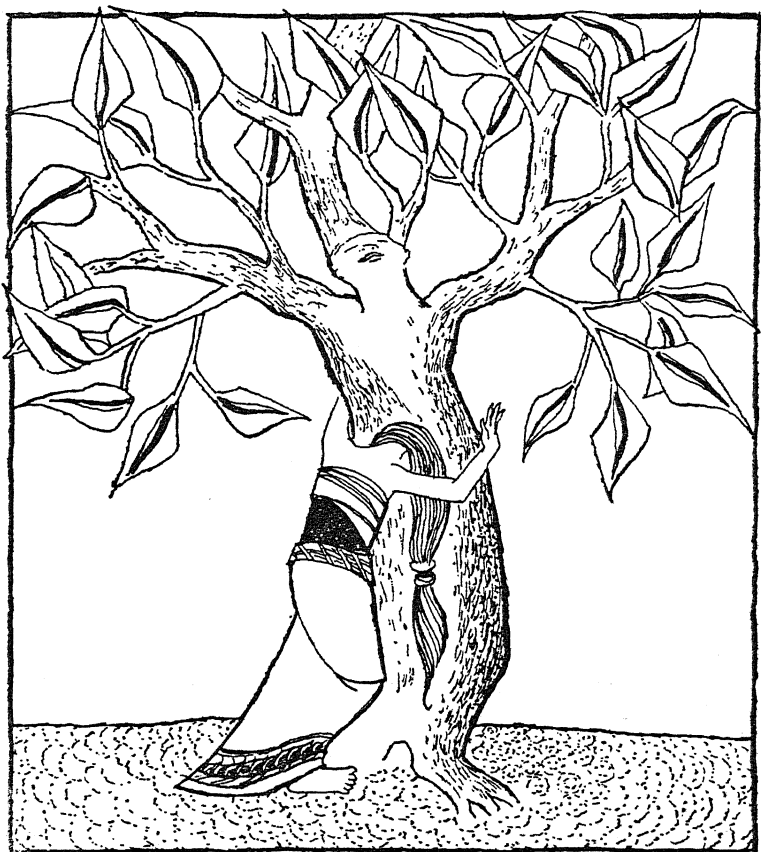
At first the princess did not see him, for her eyes were veiled with tears. But she did see a strange, brilliant light that radiated from Kama Jaja, and when her eyes had become somewhat accustomed to it, she saw the god himself. His face was very sad. "O mighty Kama Jaja," she cried, recognizing him, "you, who bless marriages, make me happy once more! Give my beloved husband his life again!"

Kama Jaja's face grew even sadder when he heard these words, for he could not make the dead live again. "My beau-

tiful princess," he said, "a wicked hand has poisoned your husband. And there is no higher power which can undo the working of this poison. I will indeed let your husband live again on earth, not as a man but as a noble tree which shall stand on this very spot."

At first, Dewi Kesumo did not understand Kama Jaja's words. She understood them only when she saw how the body of her husband was lifted up, his arms outstretched, his long hair falling along his shoulders to the ground. She saw with wonder that his body became covered with rough bark; and from his bark-covered arms, there suddenly appeared many branches graced with beautiful green leaves. Then she saw that the long strands of hair that fell to the ground were no longer black, but grey. And as she gazed at all this, she noticed that his feet were no longer visible. They had sunk into the ground. They had become the roots of this strange tree! Dewi Kesumo ran sobbing to the tree and threw her arms around its rough trunk and laid her face against it, and she cried in her sorrow, "What use have I of this soulless tree?"

"This tree is not soulless," Kama Jaja said. "It is holy, and everyone shall call it the holy waringen tree. It shall remain holy forever and ever. Its seeds shall spread over the whole of Java; the seeds shall germinate and a fine, proud tree shall sprout from every seed. Everywhere these trees shall spring from the ground, even in the smallest villages. And the holy waringen trees shall become the tree under which sacrifices are made, everywhere in Java. Kings as well as beggars shall lay their offerings to the gods beneath its branches. Children shall come to play wherever a waringen stands. Young people shall lean against its trunk and whisper their love for each other. Under its crown of leaves the bride shall pledge her troth to her bridegroom. Kings, weary with war-making, shall come to



rest under the great and holy waringen, and shall listen to the rustle of its leaves telling them of new victories. And woe to him who dares to order his slaves to fell a waringen! Sickness and great misfortune shall come to him and to his children." When Kama Jaja had said this to Dewi Kesumo, he suddenly returned to the heaven of the gods.

The sad little princess, however, remained standing on the same spot, her arms around the trunk of the great tree, her head resting against it. And so Dewi Kesumo slipped into

eternity. Her soul was taken up to the heaven of the gods, and her body was changed into a beautiful spring, where crystal-clear water forever bubbled.

While all this was happening in the deep ravine, there was sorrow and anxiety in the kingdom because of Jamojaja's disappearance.

The nobles and the courtiers knew well enough what had happened, but the common people, who were so devoted to the prince, knew nothing of what had taken place in the palace. And when, after some days, the king let it be known that Raden Samijan, the son of his second wife, was to succeed him on the throne, they understood suddenly that something strange had happened. When they learned of the banishment of their beloved prince, they became angry, and demanded that he be called back.

But the common people were not the only ones who wanted this. No, the strangest thing was that Samijan himself went to the king and begged that his brother, whom he loved so much, be allowed to return. Samijan was only ten years old, and he could not understand why, since Jamojaja's disappearance, he was being cared for with such respect and reverence, and why a bodyguard of slaves must always go with him, whenever he left the palace grounds, to carry his amulets.

"I am no prince," he said in astonishment.

"You are indeed a prince," his mother would tell him over and over again. "You are now the first son of the king; you are the heir to the throne!"

One day, when his mother had said this to him again, Samijan became very angry. He stamped his little feet and shrieked, "It's not true! I am not the heir to the throne! That is my brother! He must come back! I will go to find him myself."

And not long after that they missed little Samijan, and no matter where they searched for him, they could not find him.

Forty days and forty nights the slaves searched the forests and the mountains, the ravines and the grottos. They waded through rivers and streams, but they could find no trace of the little boy.

And he was never found. For when his longing for his lost brother grew too strong for him, Samijan cried to the gods to change him into a bird so that he could fly over the countryside, over mountains and seas and thick forests, to look for Jamojaja. And the gods heard his prayer and changed him into a beautiful bird. Now Samijan was happy. He could fly wherever he wished, from north to south, and from east to west. But wherever he flew, he could not find Jamojaja, his exiled brother.

So it was that he came one day to the waringen tree and the softly murmuring, crystal-clear spring. And he drank of the spring water and sat down on one of the branches of the waringen and began to cry sadly, "Kakagatot, kakagatot!" (I am looking for my brother.)

He did not hear how the leaves of the waringen above him whispered, "I am your brother." Nor did he hear the crystal waters of the spring murmuring, "You are with your brother."

And because he could not understand the language that the waringen tree and the spring spoke to him, the little bird flew away, sadder than before, still crying, "Kakagatot, kakagatot!" Even now, after centuries and centuries, the bird cries its sorrowful, "Kakagatot, kakagatot!" And even now he does not hear the leaves of the holy waringen tree answering him comfortingly, "I *am* your brother! I *am* your brother!"



MOHAMMED AND THE SPIDER

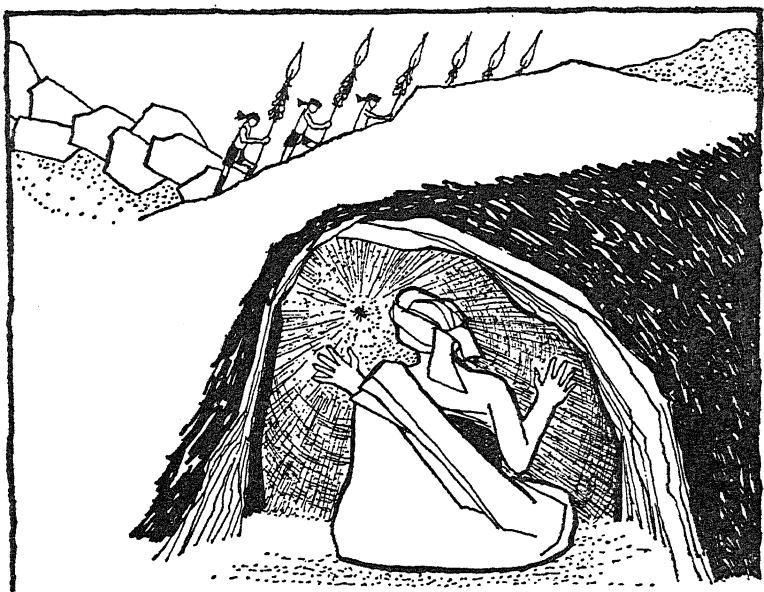


IN THE DAYS when Mohammed was living on the earth as an ordinary mortal, he often angered his father-in-law by his prophecies and his wonderful deeds. The old man hated Mohammed, and one day he roused the people against the prophet. They made life so miserable for him that finally Mohammed fled the city.

Unfortunately, some wicked people saw him flee. They immediately told Mohammed's father-in-law, who ordered them to follow the prophet and bring him back. "And if he refuses to return with you, kill him," the old man said.

The wicked men went in search of Mohammed who, in his despair, had taken the wrong road—a lonely road where no tree grew, where no house stood, and where there was not even any underbrush in which he could hide himself. He looked about him anxiously, and then he saw his pursuers who were coming closer and closer. This made Mohammed even more anxious, and he asked Allah to help him.

And Allah did help him, for all at once the prophet noticed a grotto that lay just a few steps ahead. He ran to it; but he discovered that the opening in the cave was so narrow that a man could not crawl through it. But again Allah helped him



by widening the opening sufficiently to enable Mohammed to creep through it and hide himself from his pursuers.

Now in this cave there lived a great many insects, among them a giant scorpion and a great spider with a cross on its back. The spider felt kindly toward people, but the scorpion hated everything that was called "man." When he saw Mohammed enter the cave, he became angry and flung his pointed tail so hard against the walls of the cave that all the other insects crept back into their holes and crannies in fright.

And when he saw that Mohammed did not fear him, the scorpion was even more furious. He crept up to him, and tried to chase Mohammed away with his venomous stings.

But before he could attack the prophet, the spider came out of her cranny, faced the scorpion, and asked him, "What are you doing? Why don't you leave the poor man in peace? Do you think he has hunted out a hiding place for pleasure?"

"I suffer no man in our house," said the scorpion angrily,

and he struck out even harder with his tail. "Man doesn't belong in a grotto; he belongs on the earth, and he should not live, as we do, in holes and cracks. He must go; I insist on it!"

The scorpion's attitude toward the prophet angered the spider. She placed herself in front of the scorpion and spoke threateningly, "Don't touch him, or I will weave such a strong, thick web around you that you'll never be able to get out of it!"

While the spider was saying this to the scorpion, Mohammed was listening at the opening of the cave for the footsteps of his pursuers. His worry showed on his face, and the spider noticed it and said, "Why are you afraid, man? You have nothing more to fear from the scorpion. If he tries to sting you, I will weave him fast in my strong web."

"I fear the people who are following me much more than I fear the sting of the scorpion," said Mohammed. "If they find me here in this cave, they will kill me."

"They will never find you here," the spider replied. She went to the opening of the cave and wove a great, strong web, and when it was done, she sat down in the center of it.

Mohammed was not listening to what the spider said. He was listening to the footsteps of his pursuers coming closer and closer, and now he heard their voices.

"I clearly saw him go into that cave," said the first voice. "He must have hidden himself here. Come, let us search for him. You Achmed," the voice continued, "are the smallest of us. You will creep through the opening and drag Mohammed out."

"Stupid one!" cried Achmed. "How can he have entered the cave without chasing away this spider, sitting in the middle of her web? He would have had to destroy the web itself!"

"Achmed is right," said another voice. "Mohammed cannot

be hidden in this grotto. Come, men, let us go on. We shall find him somewhere.”

In a little while Mohammed knew that the men had gone on. And now for the first time he saw the spider, sitting in the middle of her web, and realized what she had done for him.

Later, much later, he told his friends of his wonderful escape. And ever since that time no follower of the prophet ever kills a spider, because it was a spider that once saved the life of Mohammed.



WHY THE CROCODILE HATES MAN



IN THE NORTHEASTERN PART of the Tengger mountains lies the Lake of Grati, the so-called Crocodile Lake.

The lake got its name from the many crocodiles which, centuries and centuries ago, mysteriously appeared in its waters; then, after living there a while, they as mysteriously disappeared, leaving in their stead the ikan leleh, a long, dark-grey fish something like an eel. These fish were really the reason why the crocodiles are now the enemies of man. How this came about is told in the following legend:

Long, long ago, when the villagers were simple, kindly folk, the crocodiles that lived in the Lake of Grati were on friendly terms with the people of the neighborhood.

The oldest pair of crocodiles, who were called Kyai and Nyai Buaja, were the great-great-great-great-great-grandparents of the youngest crocodiles. Because they were so old, the gods had given Kyai and Nyai Buaja the power to change themselves, as soon as twilight fell, into human beings; but as soon as day broke they had to become crocodiles again.

Now Kyai and Nyai Buaja owned a gamelan which they had safely hidden away in their home on the bottom of the lake. This gamelan, which made very beautiful music, was always

being borrowed by the villagers whenever they had a marriage or a harvest feast to celebrate. In order to get in the good graces of the old crocodiles, those who wanted to hold a feast would send a little raft out on the water to the place where Kyai and Nyai Buaja came to the surface every day. On the raft would be burning incense and a fine duck or perhaps a chicken. When the old pair appeared, the people would cry, "Kyai and Nyai Buaja, my daughter is going to be married," or "We are going to have a harvest feast; our rice is ripe. May we please borrow your gamelan? And we hope you will come to the feast, too."

When the people had said this, the two crocodiles would dive down to the depths of the lake, and it wasn't long before the raft, with the gamelan on it, would reappear on the shore.

And, shortly before midnight on the evenings when the celebrations were being held and the soft, lovely music of the gamelan was drifting over the lake, Kyai and Nyai Buaja would appear in their human forms and would take part in the festivities. They would stay until just an hour before sunrise, because they were afraid that if they stayed longer and were turned back into their crocodile shapes, they would frighten the people, and they didn't want that to happen.

This went on for many years. The people often asked for the loan of the gamelan, and as often as they asked for it they would put a duck or a chicken or a little wild pig or perhaps a deer on the raft, in return. All this, of course, made the crocodiles feel more and more friendly toward the villagers.

But everything was changed when a woman called Leleh came to live in a nearby village.

Leleh was a wicked woman. People said that she was a witch, and that her charms could call forth the evil spirits, and that was why she had been banished from the village where she was

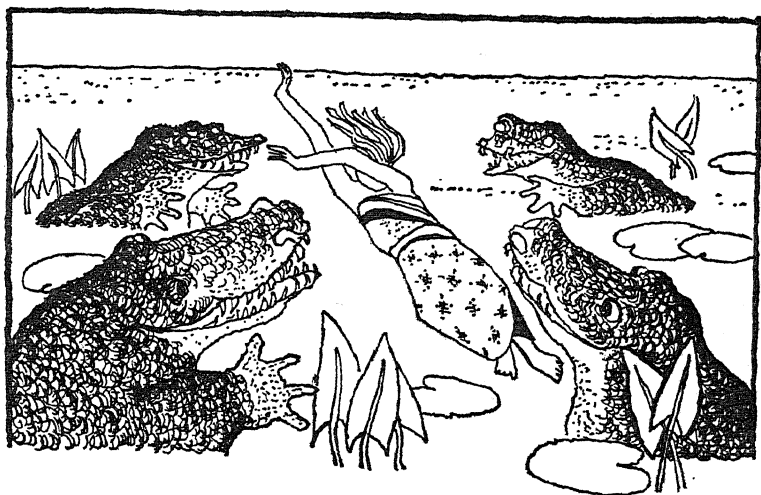
born. They even said that she knew a charm that could make her turn into a tiger, but this was not true. She was, however, a sly and cunning woman, and a thief. She stole the chickens and the eggs of the villagers, and she chased away the wild ducks that came to the shores of the lake to lay their eggs. And, what was worst of all, she plagued the crocodiles.

She grew so daring in her plaguing that one day she tied a fat duck to the end of a rope and put it on the raft, and then cried in a loud voice, "Kyai and Nyai Buaja, I'm sending you something delicious for your meal. Come up and see what it is; it's all ready for you on the raft!"

The two big heads of the old crocodiles had hardly appeared on the surface of the water, and they had hardly looked around with their knowing eyes, before the wicked Leleh pulled the little rope that was attached to the leg of the duck and drew it back to the shore. And she cried tauntingly, "I, too, like a tasty tidbit! Find something else for yourselves, old ones!" And thereupon she built a fire, roasted the duck to a delicate brown, and sat down and ate every last crumb of it.

After this had happened again and again, the old crocodiles began to tire of it. They said nothing to anyone, neither to Leleh herself nor to the villagers, but they decided between themselves that Leleh must be punished—and soon. So the next time she put a duck on the raft and called out, "I'm sending you a delicious morsel for your meal, old ones!" Kyai Buaja called back, "Send the raft a little nearer, Leleh. My wife is sick and I cannot leave her."

Leleh pushed the raft a little farther, but at the same time she pulled the duck off. And no sooner had she done this than from all sides the crocodiles shot out of the water and, led by Kyai Buaja himself, dragged Leleh with them down to the



depths of the lake. There Kyai changed her into a fish which he called the leleh fish, or ikan leleh.

He told her that from now on she would have to take care of all his great-great-great-grandchildren, the young crocodiles. But when she tried to do this, the young crocodiles bit her so fiercely that her fins became weak (and from that time to this the leleh fish has been a weak-finned fish). She was forbidden ever to leave the lake again. She could not have done so anyhow, because her many descendants put her in a narrow cleft in the rocks and forced her to stay there. There were so many of these fish, her descendants, that soon there were more leleh fish than crocodiles. Kyai and Nyai Buaja finally had to call on the villagers to help them.

The villagers fished day and night for the wicked lelehs and they caught them by the netfuls. But the more they caught, the more there were left in the lake.

Kyai and Nyai Buaja thought that the villagers were in league with the fish and merely caught them and then threw them back into the lake. And so they and all the other croco-

diles became angry with people. They became so angry that they swore eternal enmity. Kyai Buaja himself said that whenever he met a human being he would kill him immediately. And one day, when the water in the lake was higher than usual, Kyai and Nyai Buaja and all the other crocodiles left the place where they had lived so happily before the coming of Leleh. They left the lake in such a mysterious manner that none of the village people noticed their going. They only knew that the next day, when they went down to the lake and called, the crocodiles were gone. And they never came back.



WHY THERE ARE NO TIGERS IN BORNEO



THOUGH TIGERS PROWL the jungles of Java and Sumatra and many other islands of Indonesia, there are none whatever in the forests of Borneo. An old folk story tells the reason for this.

It seems that the Rajah of All the Tigers, who lived on Java, found that food was getting so scarce that he and his subjects were threatened with starvation. So he decided that he would send word to the inhabitants of Borneo that they must send him food, or he would come with his army and conquer the land.

He selected three messengers to carry his ultimatum to Borneo, and they traveled over the sea and came to the island, weary and hot. They searched everywhere for the rajah of Borneo but could not find him. When they were about to give up, they met a tiny mouse-deer.

"Where is your rajah?" the tigers demanded. "We have an important message to deliver to him."

"He is hunting," the mouse-deer replied. "What is your important message?"

"We bring word from our rajah that your ruler must sur-

render. Take us to your rajah so that we can deliver our message."

The mouse-deer thought quickly. "Would it not be better if you rested here in the shade, after your long journey, and let me carry the message for you? I promise to find the rajah and deliver your message promptly, and I will bring you his answer."

The messengers looked at one another and decided, since it was so hot and they were so tired, to let the mouse-deer do as he suggested.

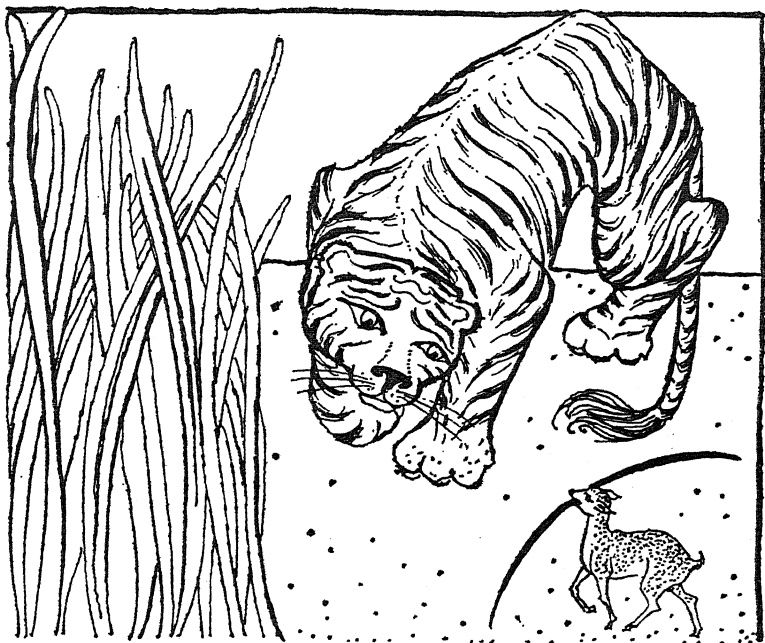
"Very well," said the spokesman, "but be quick about it. Go and tell him that the Rajah of All the Tigers demands food, in great quantities which we shall specify. It must be given to us at once or our rajah will send his army to destroy you. What is more," he said, stepping forward and nearly knocking down the tiny mouse-deer, "give him this, as a token of our rajah's might." He drew out a tiger's whisker and gave it to the mouse-deer.

"This is from the royal face," he said importantly. "The rajah himself plucked it from his whiskers, to show how strong he is."

The mouse-deer took the royal whisker and held it away from him. "It is very large," he said, in a tiny voice. "Your rajah must be strong and fierce."

"Begone!" said the messenger imperiously. "We will wait here . . . but not too long."

The mouse-deer turned and fled. His thoughts raced as he ran. If the Rajah of All the Tigers in Java needed food he must be desperate for meat. "I am meat," thought the little mouse-deer, "and so are all the creatures on Borneo. If the Rajah of All the Tigers sends an army he will destroy us . . . and then he will remain in Borneo. I must think!"



He ran through the woods and leaped the streams. Suddenly there was a rustling sound in the leaves and his quick eyes spied his friend the porcupine.

The porcupine peered up at him. "What is your hurry, kanchil?" he asked. "It is too hot to run so fast."

"I am worried . . . but seeing you has solved my problem. Give me one of your quills, friend, and save Borneo for all of us!"

"I'll gladly give you a quill," said the porcupine. "Surely I have enough and to spare—at least one for my good friend the mouse-deer. But can't you tell me why you need it?"

"Later," said the mouse-deer. "You are a good friend indeed. You have saved our country."

And off he bounded, bearing the quill in his teeth.

He ran as fast as he could back to the spot where he had left

the tigers. They were pacing back and forth, looking annoyed and fierce.

"Well, you've been gone a long time!" the oldest one cried angrily.

"I had to find our rajah," said the mouse-deer breathlessly. "And I had to wait till he woke from his nap after his hunting. Then I had to wait for an audience. And then I had to wait for his answer."

"Well, what is it?" the messengers demanded. "Did you tell him what our rajah said?"

"Word for word, as you told it to me," the mouse-deer answered. "I told him that your rajah demanded food at once, and surrender, or he would come with his great army and destroy us."

"Yes, yes. And he said . . . ?"

The mouse-deer replied, "He said, 'Very well, let the Rajah of All the Tigers in Java come and fight us. He will find that we can fight better than he. In fact,' he said, 'I am weary of peace and would welcome a battle in which we could prove our might once more.'"

"Did you give him the whisker from the royal face?" the oldest tiger asked.

"I gave it to him," the mouse-deer replied. "And do you see this whisker I hold in my teeth?"

"Is that a whisker?" the tigers asked. "It is larger than you are, longer by a foot, and thicker than your leg."

"It is from the royal face of our rajah," the mouse-deer said. He took the quill from his teeth and handed it to the oldest messenger. "Feel it; see how thick it is. Our rajah plucked it from his face and said that I was to give it to you to take to your rajah."

"Nothing more?" the messengers asked, turning pale.

"Nothing more. . . . Oh, you are going?"

The oldest tiger said hurriedly, "We must return at once. Our rajah waits for your rajah's answer."

"Of course. And it is hot here, and you have a long way to go. Be sure to take good care of the whisker . . . although, if need be, our rajah can always send another one."

The oldest tiger took the big quill carefully in his paws, and all the messengers started back to Java. They crossed the land and then the water and then the land again, and came at last to the spot where their rajah waited impatiently.

"You have been gone far too long," the rajah rumbled in his throat. "What word do you bring?"

The messengers trembled at the terrible tone of his voice, thinking of the message they had to deliver. They looked to the oldest one, and he swallowed hard, and said, "Oh mighty one, the miserable rajah of Borneo said he would welcome war and sent you this."

He stepped forward fearfully and held out the big, thick quill of the porcupine. "It comes from his royal face," he quavered.

The Rajah of All the Tigers in Java gazed at it long and hard, stroking his own whiskers the while. He could not help feeling the difference. He said nothing for a long time.

Then he looked blandly at the trembling messengers. "I have decided," he said, "that it would be better to demand food of the elephants of Sumatra."

Whether the elephants of Sumatra ever sent the food the story does not tell, but it is a fact that from that day to this there have been no tigers in Borneo.



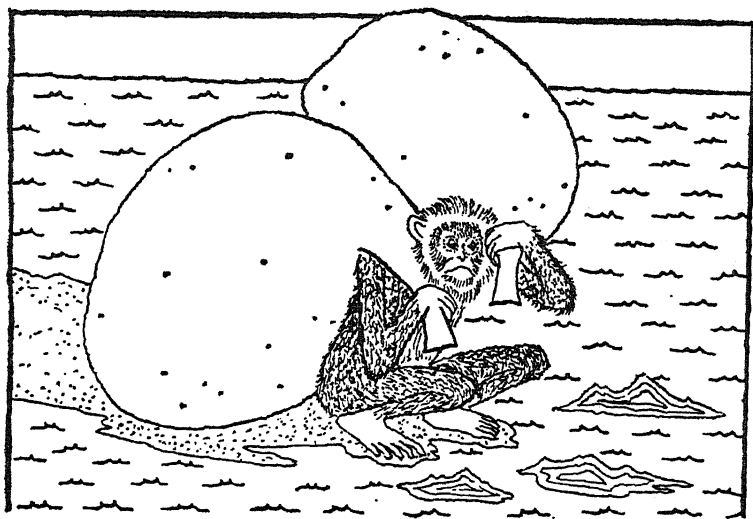
THE LEGEND OF THE KARANG



IN THE SOUTHERN PART of the province of Bantam lies the mountain range called the Kendang, where the Baduwi tribe settled long, long ago and lived far away from other people. The Baduwis still practiced the religion of their forefathers and were not yet followers of Mohammed. The Baduwis were brave and honest, for if they did anything wicked they knew that they would never reach the White Place, where all those who died went to find blessed rest and eternal happiness.

Now the White Place, according to the Baduwis, did not lie under the earth, nor was it in the heavens. It was not far from their own village, and was a place with many terraces where basalt stones of all sizes and shapes were to be found. These stones lay everywhere, even in the middle of the dense forest where the White Place was. In these stones, the Baduwis saw their gods, and so they worshipped and prayed to them, and brought offerings of rice and flowers there.

It seldom happened that a Baduwi did anything wrong in the eyes of his tribesmen. But if such a thing did happen, his soul did not reach the holy White Place, but was taken by the fire-spirits to the group of little volcanoes which lies in the



northern part of Bantam, where the highest mountain is called the Karang.

These volcanoes were not always there. How they came into being is told in this legend.

Hanomat was the king of the monkeys and a son of the great wind-god. Sometimes he wandered over the earth in the form of an orangutan, and one day he came to visit his people, the monkeys. He came with two great bags of sand slung over his shoulder, for he wanted the monkeys to help him build two little islands in the straits of Sunda. But when he came to the place where the monkeys lived, very tired from carrying his heavy load, he saw, to his surprise, that one of the gods had been there before him and had already built *three* little islands—Krakatau, Besi, and Dwars-in-den-weg. Hanomat was so angry about this that he tore his bags to pieces, and the sand ran out in great waves. The waves of sand piled up higher and higher, until they formed two big mountains.

One of these mountains Hanomat called the Karang and

the other he called Pulosari. When Pulosari had reached the height of an ordinary mountain it stayed as it was. But the Karang grew and grew until it was so high that its tip reached into the heavens.

When the monkeys saw this they thanked their king, Hanomat, because they thought that he had purposely made the Karang so high to enable them to climb up to the stars.

The mountain was hardly finished before a whole colony of monkeys climbed to the top and began to tease the stars. Yes, finally they became so impudent that they actually began to *bite* the little stars!

The gods in their heaven saw this, and one evening Vishnu said to Brahma, "Look, O Creator, how those naughty children of Hanomat's are teasing the little stars. Shouldn't we punish them for this?"

But Brahma answered, "My dear Vishnu, they will soon be tired of their teasing. Let us watch a little longer and see how it goes."

So the gods did not punish the monkeys just then. But one evening, when one of the biggest monkeys began to snap at the evening star, and the star shrank behind a cloud in terror, Vishnu said to Brahma, "Look, O great one! Must this go on night after night? Cannot you, who are so mighty, forbid these animals to do what they are doing?"

And Brahma, the kind-hearted Creator, answered, "The evening star is now beyond their reach. The monkeys cannot do much more harm tonight. Let us therefore wait till morning."

But the following morning, when day began to break and the morning star was shining beautifully in the heavens, Brahma himself looked out of the gods' heaven and saw how some of the monkeys were beginning to bite *that* lovely, brilliant star. The star looked for a cloud where she could hide

herself, but she found none, and in terror of the teasing animals she called out, "Great Brahma, if this teasing doesn't stop soon, I will not shine in the sky any more, and neither will any of the other stars!"

When the evening star and all the other stars, big and little, heard the morning star say this to Brahma, they, too, cried, "No, no, great, mighty Brahma, we will not shine in the sky any more, if this teasing by the monkeys does not stop!"

So Brahma called to him the favorite of the gods, Lurah Dalam, who by day ruled over the kingdom of Bantam, and ordered him to send Hanomat to him immediately.

"Hanomat," Lurah Dalam said, when he had found him, "Brahma has commanded me to send you immediately to the gods' heaven."

"What must I do in the gods' heaven?" asked Hanomat.

"I think that Brahma wants to give you one of the great scissors to snip off a piece of the mountain so that the monkeys can no longer climb up to the stars," said Lurah Dalam.

"Do you mean to say that I must cut off a piece of my beautiful mountain?" Hanomat cried. "And where will the piece go?"

"I think it will go into the sea," answered Lurah Dalam.

"What, must I churn up the sea with my mountaintop?" the king of the monkeys cried in anger. "Tell Brahma that if he wants to do that, he can use the three mountains that the gods put down in the Sunda Straits."

When he heard this impertinent language, Lurah Dalam became angry, too. "Do you mean to say," he cried, "that you dare tell Brahma what he should do and what he should not do? Go immediately to the gods' heaven, I tell you, and get the big scissors!"

"I don't want a piece of my big, beautiful mountain snipped

off." Hanomat mumbled. "My mountain is going to stay as it is. . . ."

"Do you refuse to do what Brahma orders?" asked Lurah Dalam in a terrible voice. "Get the scissors immediately, or I will banish you to the realm of the ghosts."

Then Hanomat knew that, whether he wanted to or not, he must go to the gods' heaven. Brahma gave him the scissors and said, "Snip off a third of the Karang, so that none of the monkeys can tease the stars any more."

"And what shall I do with the snipped-off piece, O mighty Brahma?" asked Hanomat.

"First snip it off," said Brahma. "The rest will take care of itself."

With the great scissors in his hands, Hanomat returned to the earth. Then he climbed to the top of the Karang and snipped off a third of the mountain. With a thundering noise, the snipped-off part fell, and formed, by Brahma's will, a group of smaller volcanoes. And to these volcanoes go the souls of those Baduwis who have done something wicked in their lives.



THE MIGHTY HUNTER



A YOUNG MAN whose name was Awang Durahman lived in a small village near a great forest. He liked nothing better than to wander in the woods, looking for game, and dreaming.

One day, when the sun was hot, he took his spear and went into the forest where it was cool and quiet.

As he walked he talked to himself:

“Look at me! I am the mightiest hunter in the land! No animal can hear me coming, for I walk so softly!”

With that he practically stumbled upon a small deer which lay in the shadows, sound asleep.

Awang looked down at the deer. “It is too defenseless to kill. I will take out my tobacco and my pipe and smoke a bit.”

He filled his pipe and hung his tobacco pouch on the antlers of the sleeping deer. Then he leaned against a tree, with his spear beside him, and thought, “This deer, when I kill it, will make a great deal of meat. I will have plenty for my mother, my father, and myself. I will sell the rest and have much money. What shall I do with the money?”

He thought a while longer, and smiled to himself.

“Why, I will buy some ducks, of course! There will be so

many ducks that they will make a loud noise in the village and eat all the grain. People will be angry and will ask whose ducks they are. My mother will say, 'They belong to Awang Durahman,' and people will say, 'He must be a rich man to have so many ducks.' "

Awang went on daydreaming. "Then I will sell the ducks and buy some goats. There will be many goats and they will eat the crops in the field. 'Whose goats are these?' people will ask, and my mother will say, 'They are Awang Durahman's.' Then the people will cry, 'He must be rich to have so many goats.' "

He thought a while. "After a time I will sell the goats, I think, and buy some buffaloes. They will be big and strong; they will work my fields for me. When I milk them, they will give much milk, and people will say, 'Whose buffaloes are these?' My mother will answer, 'They are Awang Durahman's buffaloes,' and people will cry, 'He must be very rich to have so many buffaloes that give so much milk.' "

A smile spread across Awang's face as he leaned against the tree and he sucked happily on his pipe and watched the smoke from it spiral into the quiet air.

"But after a time I will sell the buffaloes and buy some elephants. They will be strong—so strong that they will knock down the bamboo houses of my neighbors and trample their fields and wade in the stream. And people will cry, 'Whose elephants are these that have come to our village?' My mother will say, 'Do you not know that they belong to my son, Awang Durahman?' and the villagers will cry, 'But he must be enormously rich to have so many elephants!' "

Awang blew another puff of smoke and waited till it had vanished toward the sky just barely visible between the tree-tops.



"Then, I think, I will sell my elephants to the Rajah. He will give me his daughter in marriage, and with her I will sail to distant islands—to Java and Bali and Borneo and Amboina and Celebes. In my fine ship I will sail wherever I please, with my beautiful young wife, the Rajah's daughter, beside me."

In the waving of the leaves, he saw the motion of the waves and his body swayed as with the motion of a boat. He squinted his eyes, looking toward far horizons.

"With my beautiful wife beside me," he repeated, "I will sit on the deck, while my servants fan me with palm fronds and bring me cooling drinks. I will play games while my wife sleeps and my child Hassan crawls about the deck."

He could see Hassan's small brown body crawling over the sloping deck. He could feel the movement of the ship, rising, falling, rising—

"Heh!" he cried loudly, and leaped into the air. "Hassan has

fallen into the sea! Hassan, my child, has fallen into the sea! Save him, you, Achmed, you, Kerto!"

His spear fell to the ground and the deer sprang up in fright, and darted into the deep forest, the tobacco pouch still dangling from its antlers.

Awang shook his head and rubbed a hand across his eyes. He picked up his spear and walked slowly down the forest path.

"Aie!" he moaned sadly. "I was rich and now I am poor! Wait till I come upon that wretched deer! He has made off with my ship and my wife and my child and my tobacco pouch! Aie, Aie!"

It was cool in the forest, and sweet-smelling and quiet. The path was soft under his feet, the sun, through the tall trees, made a golden light between the shadows.

Awang walked in happy silence for a while. The wind began to rise. It sang a song to him. He listened, stopping in his walk.

"What is it the wind says?" he asked himself, and listened again. A smile broke over his face. "The wind says, 'Whose tobacco pouch is this?' and the wind answers itself, 'Why, it is the pouch of Awang Durahman, the mighty hunter!'"



WHY CROWS ARE BLACK



IN THE OLDEN DAYS, when the tigers still lived in peace with other animals, the crow was called "The Bird of Paradise." Her feathers were of purest white; but since then she has lost these beautiful white feathers and in their place wears black ones. How this came about is told in a very old tale:

When Allah had shaped the fishes, the birds, and the four-footed beasts, he called the white crow to him and said, "Bird of Paradise, you are large and handsome, you are strong and swift; therefore you shall be my messenger."

The crow bowed her sleek white head and said, "Great Allah, I will be your messenger. Tell me what you wish me to do."

Allah showed the white crow a bit of clay, and said, "From this clay I am going to knead a man."

So Allah kneaded a man, and when he had laid the figure near him on the ground he called the animals to admire it.

All of them came—the birds, the four-footed beasts, and the fishes. All of them looked on the man made of clay that lay motionless on the ground. And when Allah asked, "Well, how do you like this man?" the fishes began by saying, "It's a very, very strange thing!"

"Is that a *man*?" cried the birds in amazement. "It's nothing but a piece of clay!"

"Yes, that's all it is—just a piece of clay!" the four-footed beasts cried, too.

"And you, my messenger, what do you think of this man?" Allah asked the white crow.

"I say that it has a wonderful shape," answered the crow, "but . . ."

"What else do you want to say?" asked Allah.

"Only this: there is no life in the man," the crow said at last.

"There shall indeed be life in the man," Allah said then. "And I not only wish to give him life, I want to make him immortal. Therefore I am sending you, my messenger, this very day to bring me the life-water from the fountain of life, that shall make man immortal."

"And in what shall I fetch the water?" asked the white crow. "Will one beak-full be enough to make the man immortal?"

"No," Allah replied. "You must fetch the water in the big vessel that you will find beside the fountain of life. And remember this: do not let any other animal drink of the water, because I want man alone to be immortal. Promise me that you will not drink any of it, either."

"I promise," said the white crow, and she flew away to fetch the life-giving water. The fountain of life was far away, and the white crow became tired and thirsty.

After she filled the vessel and had flown part of the way back, she had a great desire to drink just a few drops of the water. "Allah will never be able to see that there are a few drops missing," she reasoned to herself. "And why shouldn't I



slake my thirst with the water? Then *I* shall be immortal, too."

So thought the white crow. And the more she thought about it, the more she longed for immortality. Finally she drank a few drops . . . and then a few more . . . and, at last, she had almost emptied the vessel.

"Is that the vessel full of life-water that you were to bring me?" asked Allah, when he saw the few drops that still remained in it. "With these few drops I can give man life, but I cannot make him immortal. Why were you unable to fill the vessel, my messenger?"

"There was no more life-water in the fountain," lied the white crow.

At that moment a magpie, whose feathers also were a beau-

tiful white, flew to Allah, and cried, "The white crow lies, Lord; she herself drank of the life-water that was in the jar. I sat in a tree along the way and I saw her drinking."

When Allah heard this, he was so angry at the white crow that he took her beautiful white feathers from her and in place of them gave her black ones.

And when the black-feathered crow stood before him with her head bowed in shame, Allah spoke to her and to the magpie, "I expel you both from Paradise. You, crow, because you drank the life-water and then lied about it. And you, magpie, because you were a spy and a talebearer, I will take away half of your white feathers and, even as the crow, you shall have black ones in their place!"

That is why the magpie has black-and-white feathers, and the crow is entirely black.

But whether or not the life-water made the crow immortal the story does not tell.



THE CHILDREN'S SEA



ON THE MOSS-GROWN SHORES of a little inland sea stood the huts of men who made their living by gathering edible birds'-nests. In one of these huts lived Pak Miam, one of the most fearless gatherers, with his wife and little son. Kertadikrama was the boy's name. But because his mother found this name somewhat long for so small a boy, she, and everyone else in the village, called him Kerta.

When the boy was almost ten years old and the season for gathering the nests came again, Pak Miam decided to take his son with him to the cliffs of Karang-Bolong where the nests were found.

Ma Kerta, the little boy's mother, was very frightened when she heard this. But Pak Miam quieted her fears by saying that he would not let their son climb down the cliffs. Kerta would only have to carry the offering of food for the queen, Ratu Loro Kidul, and then wait on the top of the cliff until his father told him he might return home.

It was on a Thursday, and still very early in the morning, when the father and son started for the cliffs. Like all the men who gathered birds'-nests, they had left home without eating. For it was understood that, on the first day of the gathering,

the offering of food to the Queen of the South Sea must be placed on the white mat that lay on the place of sacrifice in the palm forest before anyone ate his own food.

Pak Miam had fasted through this first day many and many a time. But Kerta was accustomed to a meal of rice cakes every morning as soon as he waked, and he did not like this fasting. He walked behind his father with a sad little face and whined without ceasing.

"Father, I am so hungry! When may I have some of the good things that I am carrying in this bag? Father, I am so hungry! When may I have something to eat?"

At first his father ignored him, but Kerta kept on crying. At last Pak Miam said, "Kerta, neither you nor I may eat the good things we are carrying with us. If we do, the queen will punish us in a terrible manner."

"How?" Kerta asked, his tears forgotten for the moment.

"I don't know. But we must not let it happen. The queen demands her sacrifice."

"Why is she so angry, Father?" Kerta asked curiously.

"She was not always so, they say. Once she was a lovely young princess, but she was banished from her father's kingdom by his jealous second wife, and was forced to wander over the countryside. When she became ill no one would take care of her but an old hermit. And when her illness grew too evil she was drawn into the sea. There she reigns, but she is angry at her fate and anyone who comes near her abode must placate her with food or offerings."

"Still, I am hungry, Father."

"When you have placed the offering on the white mat in the palm forest, we will both go and get something to eat. The warong-men will be there with their little stoves on which they cook delicious things, and you may choose whatever you

like, if you'll stop complaining and act like a big boy. It won't be long now."

Kerta was cheered by the prospect of eating very soon, and stopped his crying to walk sedately behind his father. Just the same, his hunger grew greater and greater, and finally he couldn't stand it any longer.

His little brown fingers reached inside the bag and pulled out a bit of tender chicken. It vanished between his white teeth. Then his exploring fingers found a piece of fish, baked to an appetizing brown. Then, after that, he discovered some rice which had been tinted yellow. He sampled that, too. And his searching fingers kept finding other tidbits and still others . . . until at last his stomach was heavy and the bag was very light.

Kerta's father could not see what was happening behind his back. When they came to the palm forest, Pak Miam turned to his son and said, "Take the offering out of the bag, Kerta, and carry it to the place of sacrifice. You will see it soon enough. Under a roof of palm leaves there will be a white mat and nearby will stand the priests who will take the offering from you and place it on the mat with the others."

"Yes, Father."

"Come back quickly then, and you may choose whatever you like from the little stoves of the warong-men."

Kerta hurried to the place of sacrifice. All kinds of marvelous food lay on the white mat. The priests took his offering and placed it beside the handsome offerings of some of the other nest-gatherers, and when it was put down it looked even smaller than it was. But the priests asked nothing, and Kerta said nothing. He was overjoyed that everything had gone so well for him, and ran back to the warongs. But he had eaten so much that nothing appealed to him. Even so, he chose a

number of things and stowed them away in his headcloth. Then he accompanied his father to the cliffs and watched while Pak Miam and the other men lowered themselves cautiously on the swaying ladders that were hung over the steep rocks.

While his father was gathering the nests, Kerta wandered aimlessly through the palm forest. At last, he found himself getting very tired, so he lay down between two tall trees and soon fell asleep. He woke only when one of the men came by and shook him by the arm. "Heh, young one, get up. The sun has almost set."

Kerta rubbed his eyes. He was still so sleepy that he thought the man who had waked him was his father. "Is it as late as that, Father?"

"I am not your father," the man said. "He must have gone on with the others. Get up and run home quickly. Don't you hear how the waves are beating against the rocks? Tonight it will be even worse, when the god of storms and hurricanes gets angrier."

It had grown quite dark and the storm was sweeping over the palm-roofed huts, when Kerta reached home panting and tired.

"Where is your father?" asked his mother.

"The man who woke me up said that Father must have gone home with the other men," Kerta replied.

"Then he will surely come soon," said Ma Kerta. But Pak Miam did not come. Yet Ma Kerta was not afraid. "No harm can befall your father," she said as the evening wore on. "For the offering that I prepared for Ratu Loro Kidul was so big and so fine that the queen will feel kindly toward him."

"And if the offering was very, very small, Mother—what could happen to Father, then?" asked Kerta.

"Then the queen of the South Sea would be very angry with your father," the woman answered. "And she would drag him down to the deep caverns and . . ."

But at that the boy began to cry and sob. And he told his mother how he had eaten most of the offering which had been meant for the queen.

His mother was almost crazed with grief when she heard this, and in her despair she called in her neighbors and urged them to go and search for Pak Miam.

But none of the men dared trust himself on the cliffs on such a stormy night. They promised instead that as soon as it was day they would go and search for her husband. Ma Kerta did not sleep all night. Sitting on her sleeping mat she wept for her husband.

Day was just breaking when Kerta awoke with a loud scream. And when he saw how sad his mother was he said, "Listen, Mother. It is my fault that Father did not come back, for I ate the offering. And so I will go and search for him. I promised that I would in a dream I had a while ago."

"Tell me your dream, Kerta," said his mother.

"A very ugly old woman came to me. Her eyes were coals of fire. Her hair curled like snakes around her face, and her slimy arms tried to grab me. But she could not, because I wriggled out of her reach. And that made her angry. She said, in a voice that sounded as loud as the thunder of the waves on the rocks, 'Kerta, I punished your father because the offering he brought me was not big enough. So I snatched him while he was busy gathering the birds'-nests and I threw him in one of the deepest grottos. There he will remain until he dies of hunger and thirst, or until my slaves, the octopi, throttle him with their long arms. . . .' The ugly old woman wanted to say more, but then a beautiful woman came and

stood beside her, and said to me, in a voice that was as lovely as the tones of the gamelan, 'Son of Pak Miam, it is true that your father wanders around in one of the deepest grottos. But he will not die of starvation. Before the octopi throttle him with their long arms you will save him. Listen,' she said, 'at the end of this village there is a cave. As soon as day breaks you must go there, and you will find someone who will help you. . . .' And just as she said this, she disappeared. But the ugly old woman still stood there, and when she reached out her arms again to grab me, I woke up."

Ma Kerta was sure that this dream must have a special meaning, and she called in a neighbor woman who could interpret dreams. When she heard it she said, "Yes, there is a passageway between the grottos of Karang-Bolong and the cave. No mortal has ever trod that way, but perhaps Allah means your son to be the first to do so. You had better give a big feast—a sacrifice—today and then let Kerta go immediately to search for his father."

Ma Kerta asked all the men in the village to the feast, and then they took Kerta to the entrance to the cave which lay at the end of the village, right on the shore of the little inland sea.

When Kerta entered the cave he found, first, a stone bench, and then a burial mound of stones; but he could not find the passageway to the grottos of Karang-Bolong. Feeling very sad, he sat down on the stone bench to rest. While he sat there, trying to decide whether he ought to go home again, he looked up and saw in a corner of the cave a strong, clear light.

In the midst of the light stood a man with a long, white beard. Very slowly he came toward Kerta. It was as if he floated rather than walked, and when he had come close, he laid his hands, which were as transparent as glass and as cold



as marble, on the boy's head, and said, in a voice that sounded like tinkling crystal, "What do you wish, my son?"

Kerta told how he was searching for his father who was held captive in the grottos under the rocks of Karang-Bolong. "It is my fault," he said, "that Ratu Loro Kidul carried my father off. I ate the offering that was intended for her."

"My son, you did something very terrible," the crystal voice of the glass-like man tinkled. "I know how terribly she can punish. Many, many centuries ago, before Ratu Loro Kidul had reigned very long over the realm of the South Sea, I dared to live on a tiny, fertile island within her kingdom. One night the queen came there. And in one night she made my fruitful island into a rock, whereon everything, even my house and all that was in it, turned to stone. And when I asked her where I should go, now that my very bench and my food and even the water in my vessels were turned to stone, she pointed to this burial mound and ordered her slaves to bury me under it.

"But once in every hundred years she permits me to leave my grave. Twice may I see the sun come up and go down again. Yesterday was exactly one hundred years since I was buried here. I saw the sun come up once, and once I saw it go down. Not much time is left to me. But I will help you to free your father from his prison in the grotto. Follow me, my son, and I will show you the way that leads to the caves."

The man of glass took Kerta to a narrow opening in the rocky wall and said, "Creep through this opening, as soon as I have touched your eyes with my hand."

Softly the cold, crystal hands glided over Kerta's forehead and eyes, and the boy felt himself shrinking and shrinking. He felt his body become smooth; he realized that he was no longer standing upright, but was moving forward bent over, supported by four little short legs. Kerta had been turned into a lizard!

"Remember that you must be back here before the sun goes down. And as soon as you have found your father, call me. You have only to cry, 'Help me, holy man!' Now go, my son, and quickly; I have very little time left."

Kerta, with his little lizard's body, glided through the opening. It was a very narrow passageway, long and dark, and he had to feel his way. Creeping and crawling, he came at last to the grottos of Karang-Bolong.

The surf raged against the high rock walls of the grottos, and the storm shrieked and moaned like a band of howling ghosts, so angry was the Queen of the South Sea that Kerta had dared to enter her realm. She called her slaves, the giant octopi, and told them that they should throttle the life out of Pak Miam immediately, before Kerta could reach his father and free him. And the many-armed monsters reared up from

the bottom of the sea and from behind the great rocks that lay on the sea's floor, and groped their way toward Pak Miam who was lying in a rocky cleft, exhausted by hunger and fear.

But Kerta, as a little lizard, crept into the cave and, seeing the peril his father was in, cried out with all his might. "Help us, holy man!" Hardly had he said the words when the giant octopi disappeared in the sea, and Kerta saw that his father, too, had suddenly been changed into a lizard. But he lay still and unmoving, as if he were dead.

Kerta was afraid that he and his father would not be able to get back to the grotto before the sun went down, and so he began to drag his father along with his little pointed lizard's mouth. But this did not go easily or quickly, and with all the pushing and pulling Kerta was almost exhausted. And he had so far to go!

Only a short part of the distance had been traveled before Kerta felt his strength ebbing away. But he would not give up. He would push and pull a while, and then he would rest a while; but the times when he had to rest grew longer and longer. Little by little he dragged his father along, and just as they had reached the opening and he had cried once more, with the very last of his breath, "Help us, holy man!" he fell down, unconscious.

He did not hear the crystal voice of the man of glass tinkle, "Where are you? Where are you, my son?" And he did not hear his father, who had been turned into his human form again by the power of the old man, calling to him, "Where are you? Where are you, my Kerta?" He did not hear anything. But when the sun had gone down, and the man of glass had begun his second hundred years' rest in the stone burial mound, a little lizard crept slowly through the narrow open-

ing. He spoke to Pak Miam who was waiting at the entrance to the cave, and who was filled with grief because his son would have to remain a lizard for a hundred years.

"Do not feel sad, Father," he said. "You were punished because I ate the offering of food that was meant for Ratu Loro Kidul. Sooner or later the angry queen would have demanded a sacrifice for that. I shall be that sacrifice, Father."

Once more the little lizard gazed with his glittering eyes at Pak Miam, and then he crept out of the grotto toward the inland sea, and disappeared in its depths.

And to this day the little inland sea is called the Segara Anakan, which means the Children's Sea, because of Kerta, who gave himself as a sacrifice to Ratu Loro Kidul.



THE MAGIC OYSTERS



PAK SIDIN and his wife Munah and their many children lived in a tumble-down hut in a little village in the neighborhood of Rongkob. Pak Sidin was very poor. But he had not always been so poor. He had once had a fine, fertile sawah, and two strong buffaloes over which his eldest son Amat watched.

One day the boy had taken the buffaloes to graze on an open place near the broad river that flowed past the hut, when a sudden great flood came—it was a stormy day in the southwest monsoon—and there was no time to lead the buffaloes to safety. The animals, and little Amat too, were swept into the roaring waves, and were never seen again.

It was this same flood that ruined Pak Sidin's beautiful rice field and that caused his house, made of closely woven bamboo and palm leaves, to collapse and be carried down the river.

So sadness and poverty had come to the little household. Pak Sidin and his family took refuge in the tumble-down hut, and it seemed as if misfortune followed him there. Fevers sapped his strength, so that he was too weak to work the rice field. And he had no money to buy new buffaloes to work

for him because all his money, along with his other possessions, had been swept away in the flood.

One day, when there was nothing left to Pak Sidin but a little rice and grain, and he was wondering what he could do to feed his hungry children, he met one of the men who made his living gathering birds'-nests, and he told his story to him.

"Why don't you gather birds'-nests, too?" the man said. "We always have work and are well paid."

"How can I gather birds'-nests when I have always been a farmer?" sighed Pak Sidin. "Climbing up and down those steep ladders against those rocky cliffs! And then . . . there's Ratu Loro Kidul. . . ." Pak Sidin could scarcely say the name out loud, he feared the powerful queen so much.

But his friend, Suroh, laughed at him and put his mind at rest. "Come, come," he said, "the queen isn't to be feared that much! Prepare a good sacrifice for her tomorrow morning, and then the day after tomorrow come with us to the cliffs. You can see how the work appeals to you, and if the queen is well disposed toward you, you will certainly never have to worry about floods any more."

When Pak Sidin told his wife that he intended to gather birds'-nests for a living and was going with the other men to the cliffs of Rongkob, she thought that this was a good plan. But when he told her about the sacrifice he would have to take along, she began to cry and sob, "Oh, but we have nothing in the house except two batoks of rice and four ears of grain!"

"Divide the grain with the children," Pak Sidin ordered, "and prepare the two batoks of rice for the queen. Color part of it red and the rest yellow, so that the eyes of the mighty queen will be enchanted with the beautiful colors."

At first Munah objected, saying that the children were always hungry and that the grain was not enough to still their

hunger. "And besides, what will you eat?" she asked her husband.

"I shall fast," Pak Sidin answered, "until after the sacrifice is set down on the offering-place. After that my friends will surely lend me something so that I can buy some food at the warongs."

On the day that Pak Sidin was to go with the other men, Munah was busy before sunrise preparing the beautifully colored rice and putting it in Pak Sidin's best headcloth.

"I put it in your best headcloth," she said. "If one offers a sacrifice, everything should be clean and neat."

Faint and exhausted from his fasting, Pak Sidin started out with his friends. Curiously he looked now and again at the beautifully colored red and yellow rice that was partly visible through a fold in the headcloth. But he did not eat a single grain. He thought how overjoyed the queen would be when she saw the brightly colored rice placed with the other offerings of food on the white mat in the palm forest.

Pak Moor, one of the other men, however, behaved in an entirely different manner. As a sacrifice he carried beautiful white rice and chicken and fish and all kinds of other good things. And when no one was looking, he stole first a bit of this and then a bit of that, until by the time he reached the place of sacrifice he had only some chicken bones and some banana skins left.

Pak Sidin's offering already lay on the white mat when Pak Moor came up, puffing and blowing and saying that he was late because he had lost his offering along the way.

But when all the men went to eat at the warongs, and only Pak Moor ate nothing, they began to doubt the truth of his story, and they whispered to one another that the queen was going to be very angry, that something dreadful was going to

happen! As they said this, they all looked at Pak Sidin, the newcomer. Even the overseer looked at him and took care to be near him when they came to the ladders.

The weather was fine when the men began the dangerous descent of the cliffs. Pak Sidin went down between the overseer and one of the best men. "Don't look down," the overseer warned him. "Look only at your ladder, and be sure to hold fast to it." And when they reached the surf and took hold of the ropes to come to the caves, the overseer told him, "You stay here in this first cave, Pak Sidin, and look around a while; perhaps it will be easy after that to find the nests."

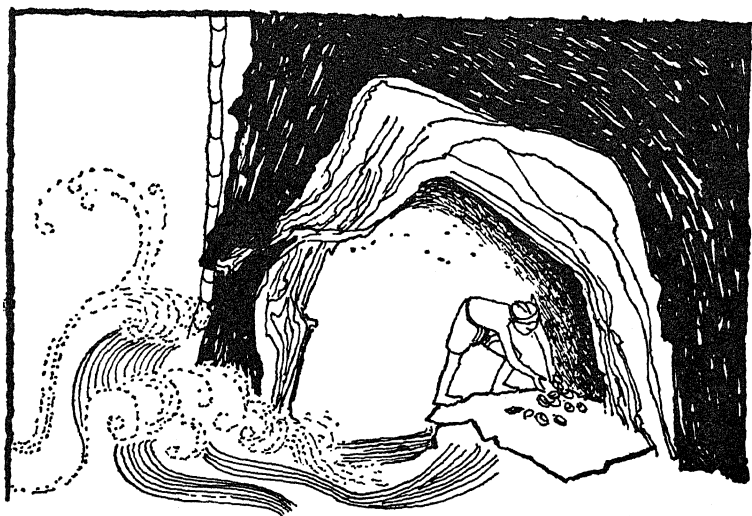
Pak Sidin did so. He looked around the cave, first along the walls, from top to bottom, and then he saw a number of oysters lying on a big, flat stone. He thought that it would be nice to take some of them to his wife, because she was so fond of oysters and must be very hungry by this time. "She will have divided the grain among the children, and gone without anything to eat herself," he said. "So I will take some of these oysters to her."

"Yes, Pak Sidin, take some of the oysters for her," a voice cried to him from the sea. "But don't let any mortal see them. Put them under your waistband and in your headcloth, for these oysters are meant only for you. They are your reward for the sacrifice."

Suddenly it became very quiet in the cave, and in the deep silence Pak Sidin gathered as many oysters as he could stuff beneath his waistband and in his headcloth. A little later the overseer came back, and with his coming the rest of the oysters that were clinging to the rock swiftly disappeared.

The overseer showed Pak Sidin how he should pluck the nests from the rocks and how he should proceed after that.

Pak Moor was in another cave. He felt very tired and sleepy



after gulping down the food which had been meant for Ratu Loro Kidul, and so, instead of working, he sat down on one of the stones in the cave and soon fell asleep.

And while her husband was sleeping, Pak Moor's wife was standing on the shore and crying to the Queen of the South Sea, "Great, mighty queen, please give us a fortune as great as my husband's offering was great!"

And on the other side of the shore Munah, Pak Sidin's wife, was sitting in front of her little hut, after having given the last of the grain to her children, and crying, "Great, mighty Ratu Loro Kidul, please let me see my husband again! Please bring him back safely to me and the children!"

Pak Moor slept on and on. He did not know that the day was growing darker, that the sky was becoming grey. He did not hear how the thunder rolled and the storm howled incessantly; he did not hear how the waves dashed in fury against the rocks. He did not see the lightning flashes that turned the cave into a place of blue flame. Not until an enormous wave broke over him did Pak Moor awake from his deep slum-

ber. Then he sprang up and tried to grasp the rope that would bring him to the ladders again. But he could not catch hold of it before another great wave dashed against him and threw him back, and he heard a voice that rang like the swish of the sea crying to him, "You miserable glutton! Why did you eat the offering that was meant for me? Tell me, why did you do it?"

"I was hungry," Pak Moor cried in terror.

"Hungry—hungry—" the voice echoed, and he heard a mocking laugh.

Now for the first time Pak Moor realized that it was Ratu Loro Kidul who was speaking to him. "Oh, forgive me, forgive me, mighty queen!" he begged.

"I never forgive him who eats the offering that was meant for me," the voice spoke. "Instead I take him with me to my undersea caves. Come, follow me there. My slaves are waiting for you. They have their many arms outstretched to catch you. They will embrace you and . . ."

"Have pity, oh mighty queen, have pity!" sobbed Pak Moor. "I have a wife and many children, and they will all die of hunger if I do not return to them."

"What he says is true, O great queen," another voice said suddenly. It was one of the little sea sprites that spoke.

"But he must be punished," Ratu Loro Kidul insisted.

"So he must," the little sea sprite said. "But do not give him to the octopi. Give ear to the prayer that Pak Moor's wife has made to you. That would be the most serious punishment of all for this glutton."

"What did his wife ask of me?"

"She begged that you should give her a fortune as great as her offering was great; the offering that her husband set down for you on the place of sacrifice."

"Well, then, we shall listen to her prayer," the queen said. And to Pak Moor, "You may go back to your wife and children. And I shall answer the prayer of your wife. Here, grasp your rope and climb up!"

Pak Moor, overjoyed because he believed that the queen felt kindly toward him, leaped up the rope to the ladders, climbed to the top of the cliff and stood once again on the rocky wall. Then, muttering to himself about the great fortune that would come to him and to his family because Ratu Loro Kidul had listened to his wife's prayer, he ran toward his home. "Of course Gariah, my wife, prayed for something fine," he thought. "Gariah surely must have prayed for great wealth."

As he was hurrying homeward he saw his father-in-law running toward him, crying as he ran. "Why are you crying?" he asked the old man. "Are you crying for me? Then dry your tears, because Ratu Loro Kidul has given us a great fortune! She has answered Gariah's prayer. . . ."

"Then Gariah must have prayed for misfortune!" the old man sobbed. "Your house was ruined by the lightning, and your coconut trees are all burned. And the storm swept your goats and your chickens into the river and they all drowned. . . ."

Pak Moor could not believe that this was true. He left the old man standing in the road and ran on toward the village. But his house was no longer there, and the coconut trees in his garden were all charred. And near one of the bare, blackened tree trunks sat his wife, sobbing as if her heart would break. The children, who were standing around her, were crying too, because they were very hungry.

When Gariah saw her husband coming, she began to weep even harder. Pak Moor asked her, "Wife, what was it that you asked in your prayer to the queen? Why did you pray for

misfortune? Why didn't you ask for riches and good luck?" And his wife answered, sobbing, "I did ask for riches and good luck! I asked for riches as great as your offering was great . . ."

Pak Moor had nothing to say. He dared not tell his wife that the offering he had laid on the white mat was no offering at all—only a few gnawed-off chicken bones and a few banana skins. And from that day misfortune followed Pak Moor.

Pak Sidin, however, was rewarded by Ratu Loro Kidul. For when he returned to his wife and children, who were sitting sorrowful and hungry in the tumble-down hut, and gave them the oysters that he had brought from the cave, he found that in every oyster lay a large, perfect pearl! And with the money that the beautiful white pearls brought, Pak Sidin was able to buy a pair of buffaloes to work his rice field, and after that there was always enough rice to feed his family.

But Gariah, Pak Moor's wife, could never understand why, when she had prepared such a big offering for Ratu Loro Kidul and had prayed for a fortune as great as the offering was great, she should now be so poor. She could not understand why Pak Sidin, whose offering had been only two batoks of rice, should suddenly be so rich that he could build a new house and two large rice-barns and buy a pair of buffaloes; or why his harvest was so abundant that the barns were filled to bursting with fine, full ears of rice!



THE BATTLE OF THE BUFFALOES



IN WESTERN SUMATRA, the houses have roofs that curve upward at the ends to make them look like buffalo horns. The roofs have been built this way for many centuries, and if you ask why, the people will tell you this story:

In ancient times there was a mighty rajah of Java who was so powerful that he had conquered all the islands of the Indies. No one could withstand him. There was only a small part of Sumatra—the western part—which had not yet come under his rule, and he sent his ambassadors there with a message: the people of that land must surrender or be killed.

The men met to discuss the rajah's edict. "If we fight, we cannot win," they decided, after a long time. "The rajah is too strong and has too many men."

"But if we do not fight," some of them said, "we will be taken prisoner. Our women will be slaves. Our families will be separated. Our houses will be burned. Our fields will be ruined. Is it not better to fight?"

"But if we fight, many of us will be killed, and our women will still be slaves and our fields will be ruined and our houses burned," the others said.

"Then what is to be done?" they asked of each other.

One of the oldest men, a wise one, said at last, "When we are weak in arms and men, we must be strong in heart and mind. Let us think."

So the men of all the villages in western Sumatra met to think. What could they do to save themselves and their land and their families? How could they outwit the rajah who was determined to conquer them, as he had conquered the peoples of all the other islands?

At last the old man spoke. "It has come to me," he said, "how we may save ourselves."

"Let us hear!" the villagers cried, though they had small hope.

"Let us send word to the rajah that if we fight his army it will mean great loss of life to all of us—to his armies and to ours. Instead we propose to send a karbau into the field against any karbau that the rajah of Java may select. If our buffalo wins, we shall be free forevermore. If his buffalo wins, then we shall be his prisoners and his slaves."

"But where can we find a buffalo that will surely win?" a young man demanded. "For if our buffalo does not win, then it will as bad as if we had fought and lost."

"We must use our wits," the old man said.

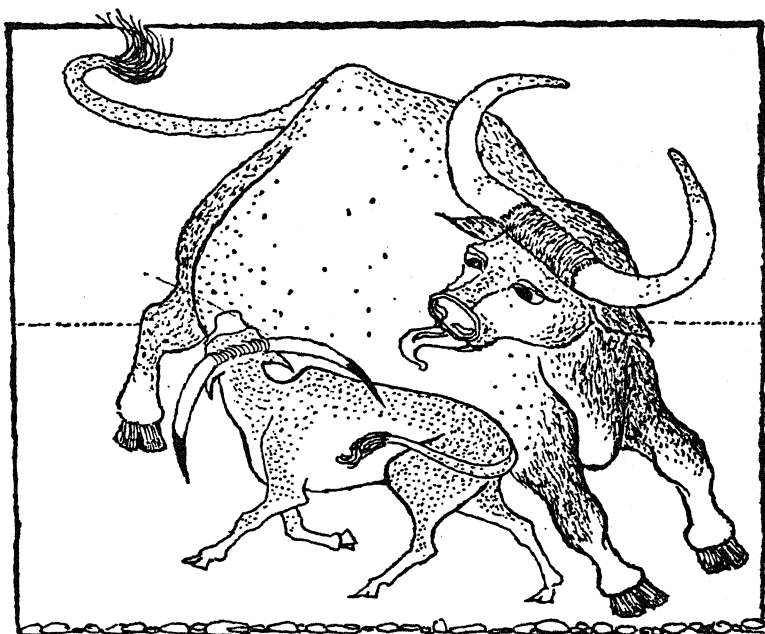
The people grumbled that it was a wild scheme, that there was no assurance that the old man's plan would work or that the rajah would even accept the challenge.

"Have you a better idea?" the old man asked.

They mumbled that they could think of nothing else.

"Well, then?" said the old man.

So the people of all the villages chose a messenger to go to Java and tell the powerful rajah of their plan. "Is it not better," the emissary said, "that one buffalo dies in battle than many of our men—and yours?"



The rajah thought it over. "It is true," he said. "I am tired of battles, yet I wish to add all of western Sumatra to my kingdom. So I will send the biggest and strongest buffalo in all my islands to fight against any buffalo you may choose. And my buffalo will win and your people shall be my slaves. For where can you find a buffalo to stand up against one I have chosen, when I have all the islands of the Indies in which to find him, and you have only the puny lands of western Sumatra?"

When the messenger returned, there was gladness among the people, because now at least there was a chance to escape the war.

The rajah meanwhile sent his hunters throughout his kingdom to find the fiercest buffalo they could discover and to bring it back to him. And when they returned with their prize, the rajah smiled to himself. Surely no buffalo in the world

could be bigger or fiercer or stronger than the animal that stood before him, eyes blazing, head crowned with long, curved horns.

The Sumatrans found their buffalo, too. They took a young bull calf from its mother and put it in a pen, away from her, while they fitted sharp iron points to its little horns. The calf was hungry and cried, but they did not feed it or let it go near its mother so that it could drink her milk. They kept it penned up for three days, until the little buffalo was desperate with hunger.

The rajah of Java came to western Sumatra, with his retinue and his fighters and his buffalo. "Bring on your buffalo," he cried imperiously, "and let us get this over!"

His keepers released the fierce buffalo from his cage at one end of the field, and the creature stood with lowered head, seeming to breathe fire through his nostrils. Everyone watched as the villagers let the hungry little buffalo out of his pen.

The rajah and his courtiers laughed aloud at this foolish business. "It will be a matter of seconds," the rajah sneered. "Why did I come all the way from Java to see such a silly spectacle? The people of western Sumatra are even more stupid than I believed."

The little buffalo calf stood on its wobbly legs at one end of the field. At the other end, it saw another buffalo, big and strong. From the distance, it looked like its mother.

On its weak little legs, the calf began to run across the field. The big buffalo stood waiting for one of his own size to come and fight him.

The little buffalo ran up to the creature it thought was its mother, and lifted its hungry mouth to find milk.

The sharp points the Sumatrans had put on its horns ripped

open the big buffalo's belly, and he let out a cry of pain and fell down—dead.

The villagers shouted with joy. The rajah stood up and shook his fist toward the sky. "I have been fooled," he roared in anger. But he had promised . . . and so he took his warriors and his courtiers and his big buffalo back to Java, and never bothered the people of western Sumatra again.

The villagers removed the iron points from the little buffalo's horns, decked it with garlands of flowers, and led it back to its mother so it could slake its thirst.

And from that day to this the people of western Sumatra have built their roofs to resemble the long, curved horns of the karbau, and they call their land Minangkabau—the victory of the buffalo.



THE SACRED FISH OF POLAMAN



IN ONE of the many villages that, ages ago, lay at the foot of the Smeru, Indra's holy mountain, there lived a Hindu who was a pariah—a member of one of the lower castes. He was ridiculed by all who knew him because he had told them that he had had a dream in which Brahma himself had said, "Polaman, someday you shall perform a miracle."

"You, a pariah, *you* have been chosen to perform a miracle?" they taunted.

Polaman did not understand it himself. He was so poor that he could barely buy enough food to keep himself alive. How could he ever perform a miracle? With what? But he said stoutly, "That is what Brahma told me in my dream."

On a certain day, after he had been going about the town of Singosari begging, he sat down on the steps of the temple, with the other beggars, to count his pennies. He was tired and hot and discouraged. "Nine pennies!" he said sadly to himself. "Nine pennies! Not even enough to buy some rice or grain." The words of the dream came to him, and he knew that the others were right to ridicule him. "How shall I, who am so poor, ever perform a miracle?"

He got up from the temple steps and walked toward the

market, where people were milling about, to buy food from the little stands. But when he asked for nine pennies' worth of rice or grain, everyone laughed at him and told him to move along.

Hungry and tired, he walked to the edge of the woods that surrounded the town. Under a palm tree sat a woman with head bowed. She was weeping. Polaman thought, "She must be a pariah like myself. She's weeping because people have been abusing her and scoffing at her, as they do at me." He went up to her and said gently, "Why do you weep, my sister?"

The woman raised her eyes. "I am not your sister," she said haughtily. "I belong to the Brahman caste. My brother, one of the priests, brought me these fish from one of the villages in the kingdom of Surabaya. . . ."

She opened a little basket made of woven palm fibers and showed Polaman a number of tiny silver fish which, as soon as the basket was opened, leaped out and slithered over the ground.

Polaman who had never seen live fish, sprang back in fear. "Don't touch them!" he shouted to the woman. "Don't touch them! They're bewitched." She was trying, without much success, to catch the little fish and and return them to the basket.

"Please don't touch them!" Polaman begged. "Whoever saw fish that sprang about like grasshoppers?"

"I know. . . . I didn't dare touch them at first myself," the woman said. "But my brother said that the fish he saw in the village by the sea all leap about like that. He said that is because they were caught alive in the water, and they can live only in water. But when I put them in good hot water, they wouldn't stay in it! They sprang out, throwing the hot water over my feet so that I shrieked with pain. And now what am I going to do with them?" she asked. "I certainly don't

want the creatures. Would you perhaps buy them from me?"

Polaman wanted very much to have them. He thought the little silver fish were beautiful, and, he thought, they ought to be very tasty. But he had only nine pennies. "I'd like to buy them," he told the woman, "but I am poor; I have only nine pennies."

The woman was secretly afraid of the little fish that were leaping about in the basket, but of course she would not say so to Polaman. "Take them," she said. "Take them, basket and all. But go at once, because my brother might come along and see that I had sold these lovely little fish to a pariah."

Polaman did not let himself be bothered by her words. As a pariah, he was used to such words. So he paid her his nine pennies, took the basket, and put it on his head.

He said to himself, as he walked toward the woods, "I'll build a fire, and fry the fish. With some fruit that I may find in the woods they'll make a meal fit for the gods."

"They'll not become a meal for the gods," a tiny, thin voice said, almost in his left ear.

Polaman looked around. There wasn't a soul in sight. He thought, "I could have sworn that I heard something. Maybe it was a bat, hanging on one of the branches and squeaking. . . ."

He was desperately hungry and could scarcely wait to build a fire and fry his fish. When he found a small open spot, he gathered some wood and was just laying a fire when he saw a bull coming toward him, head lowered, at full speed. "He'll kill me!" Polaman thought in fright. "He'll kill me. I have nothing—"

"Quick! Throw the bull two of your little fish, and nothing shall harm you!" a voice said in his ear—the same thin, fine voice that he thought he had heard just a while before.

Without thinking, Polaman grabbed two of the fish out of the basket and threw them toward the bull. And, to his amazement, as soon as the bull saw the fish, he stopped suddenly, turned around, and ran with equal speed in the opposite direction.

Just the same, Polaman wasn't sure that the bull might not return. He decided not to wait to build a fire in this particular place. He would go farther into the woods.

As he rounded a curve in the forest path he saw, half-hidden behind a veil of waving tree moss, a woman who, he knew at once, belonged to the highest caste. She crouched on the earth, her head in her hands, and her shoulders shook with her weeping.

He was a pariah and dared not go near her. He paused, but her weeping did not stop. At last he could not stand it any longer, and he asked humbly, "Tell me, O daughter of Brahma, why you are so sad?"

The woman had not heard him approach and now she looked up with large, frightened eyes. "Oh, help me . . . help me!" she cried breathlessly, as if she had been running. "Brahma be praised! He must have sent you to me. . . . At first I thought you were someone who would take me back . . . to the house I fled from . . . last night. For you see . . . my husband . . . died and I was to be burnt on his pyre." She shivered, her eyes beseeching him.

"I don't want to die! Before they came to bind my feet and crown me with flowers I ran away . . . I ran and ran—" Suddenly she leaped up. "Listen! They *are* coming! Don't you hear them coming through the woods, singing?"

Yes, Polaman heard them, too. The sound grew louder as they listened. The woman's face was full of fear. Oh, if only he could rescue her!

It was almost as if someone nearby had read his thoughts, for again the little voice whispered in his ear, "Throw two of the fish behind you—hurry, hurry—and you will be saved!"

Polaman thought, "I'll try it again. The fish saved me before when the bull rushed at me."

He took two of the little fish out of the basket and threw them onto the ground. Almost at once two huge tigers leaped out of the underbrush, snatched the fish and ate them in one gulp, and began to growl fiercely in their throats. When the Brahmans appeared on the path, the tigers sprang toward them, growling and snarling so loudly that the men turned and fled, shrieking in fear. The tigers ran after them.

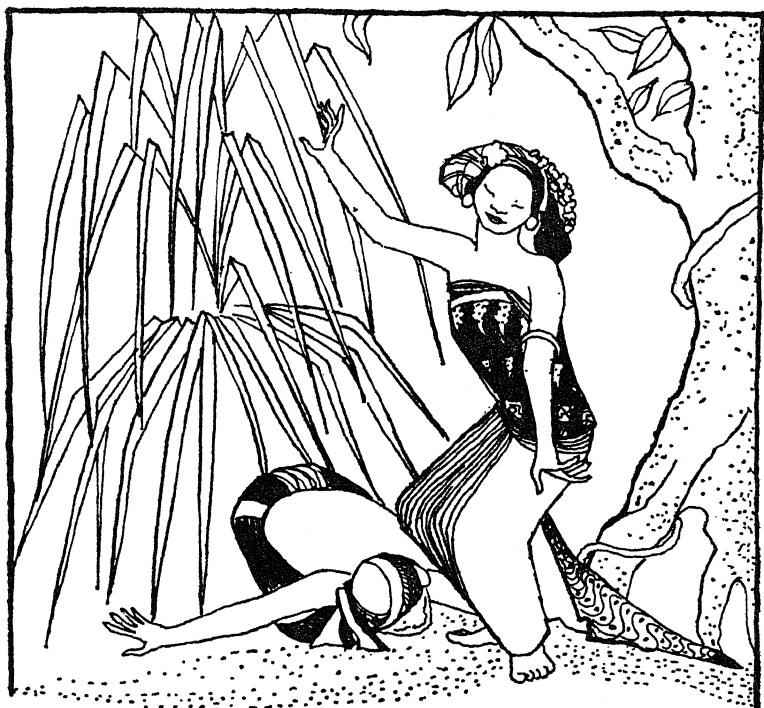
"Now you are saved!" Polaman said, sighing with relief. "Now you can return to the house of your elders."

"My elders," the woman said sadly, "would only return me to the house of my husband from which I fled last night. They find it a great honor that a daughter of theirs was married to a man of such high rank that she must be burned on his pyre. . . . Oh, take me with you!" she begged. "Wherever you go I will follow you!"

"But I am a pariah, an outcast," Polaman told her, touched that she should want to go with him. "Don't you know, noble lady, that it would be called a misdeed if we should go our way together?"

"I know that," the woman said. "I will become a pariah too, for the rest of my life. Only let me go with you as your sister; or, if you don't want that, let me be your wife."

Polaman, the stepchild of the world, knelt on the ground and kissed the feet of the Brahman lady. He said humbly, "Where I go, there shall you go also, my wife." And they rose together and went farther into the woods, walking side by side



until Polaman, who had not eaten all day, was faint with hunger.

"Let us rest here a while," he said, "and I will fry our fish."

His wife began to hunt for wood and flint. She came back discouraged. "Here is wood," she said, laying down a bundle of sticks, "but I cannot find any flint."

"Never mind," he comforted her. "We'll just eat the fish raw." He started to open the little basket, but stopped when he heard the same soft, high voice whispering, "Better save your fish till you have need of them. Look around you!"

Polaman looked around him, and saw a big palm tree, full of ripe coconuts. High in the tree sat two monkeys. The monkeys saw Polaman and his wife and were exceedingly

angry. In their anger they tore off the coconuts and threw them down, one after the other, till Polaman and his wife had more than enough with which to still their hunger and their thirst.

Polaman wanted to find his way out of the woods, but his wife cried, "Oh, Polaman, let us go on! If we leave the woods, people will see me, and tomorrow they will build a pyre, just for me, and burn me."

"But I must find the way out of the woods!" Polaman said. "See, the sun is already going down, and my village lies so far from here. We shall be lost. And what then? We'll starve. Or the tigers will find us and eat us."

"Maybe the tigers will have more pity on me than my friends and my elders," his wife said sadly. "Maybe they will spare us."

They began to walk on, taking some of the coconuts with them. They walked until night fell and they could not see one foot in front of the other. "We shall have to spend the night here," Polaman said. "At least we have our coconuts and our fish. We won't have to go hungry."

They had just sat down and begun to open a coconut when suddenly, very near them, they heard a most frightful noise. "Oh, it's the tigers!" the woman cried, crazed with fear. "What can we do? What can we do?"

"Climb a tree," Polaman answered swiftly. "And wait for the dawn."

They felt along the tree trunks. It was so dark that they could see nothing. But they could tell that there were only young trees here, that would break under their weight. And the growling of the tigers came closer and closer!

They clasped each other's hands and, in desperation, waited for the tigers to pounce on them and kill them. Again the

thin, light voice came clearly to them: "There are four tigers. Throw each one of them a fish, and they can do you no harm."

In the darkness Polaman and his wife could already see the glittering eyes of the tigers. He fumbled at the basket, got it open, and threw four of the fish into the night.

Polaman and his wife stood rooted to the ground with fear. What would happen? They could not see the tigers, but all at once they knew that the beasts had found the fish and eaten them. And a moment later, the sound of their snarling and growling grew more distant . . . and still farther away . . . and they realized that the tigers had gone in the direction of Singosari, away from them!

Polaman's wife cried, in a trembling voice, "Polaman, you are no ordinary man! You are no pariah! You are a magician—one of Brahma's chosen! I will never be afraid again. No, not even if a thousand tigers come after us!"

Her husband was not so easy in his mind. He knew very well that he was no magician, and, moreover, he had noticed that there were only two little fish left in the basket. He gave a deep sigh.

"What do I have now for my nine pennies?" he thought to himself. "And what will happen, if more tigers come and I have to throw them the last of my fish?"

"If you have rested enough," he said to his wife, "let's go deeper into the woods. One never knows; there might be more tigers hereabouts."

"Very well," his wife said, "let's grope our way along. I'll not be afraid when I am with you."

Polaman walked thoughtfully, trying to think what he should do. He noticed, by the sound of her voice, that his beautiful wife was thoughtful, too. In spite of what she had said, she must be worried—and still fearful. They went farther

and farther into the forest, not knowing where they were going or which path to follow, fumbling and stumbling through the darkness. The path grew harder to follow and they found themselves hemmed in by tall, sharp plants with long thorns. The thorns pricked their bodies and cut their feet and hands. When they tried to push them away, the thorns caught in their hair and held them fast.

While they tried to free themselves, Polaman suddenly cried, "Look, wife, look! What do you see?"

"What should I see?" she answered, thinking that he had glimpsed another tiger or some other beast of prey.

"There! Look there, over to the right!" he cried, in joy. "See, it's glimmering through the tree trunks."

His wife did not understand him. "I don't see anything," she complained. "Nothing but a strip of light. Perhaps it's the beginning of day—"

"I think it's the edge of the forest," Polaman rejoiced. "If it is, and if we can reach it, our troubles are over."

The strip of light grew broader. Their fear and weariness forgotten, they walked faster and faster. But when they reached it, they saw that it was not a strip of light. It was a little pond. The pond had been formed by a tiny stream of water that fell over a rock. In the grey light of dawn Polaman and his wife saw, too, that a colony of monkeys was sitting in the crotches of the vine-hung trees. Old and young monkeys shrieked at them. It was as if they were crying, "What are you doing in our territory?" They made so much noise that Polaman thought of giving them the last of his fish.

Just then his wife called anxiously, "Oh, Polaman, take this dreadful bat off my head! Oh, oh, he's grabbing my hair!"

"I can't!" Polaman shouted back. "There's one on my own head!"

"You must help me—you must!" Her voice rose in terror.

"Believe me, I can't do it!" Polaman was beside himself. "There's another one on my shoulder!"

"Yes, you *can*!" his wife protested angrily now. "You're a magician. Do something! I'm terrified of the creatures!"

Polaman, trying hard to rid himself of his own bats, suddenly heard the little voice: "Put one fish on top of your wife's head, and one on your own . . . and see what happens."

Polaman was scarcely able to get his hands free of the bats' great claws and the widespread wings encircling him, but at last he managed it, ripped open the basket, and reached for the remaining fish. He rushed blindly toward his wife and put a fish on her head, and then one on his own head. Then he tossed the empty basket on the ground.

And then the miracle happened! As soon as the bats saw the fish, they flew with them to the pond and threw them into it. And immediately the lid of the basket opened, of itself, and out of it flowed crystal-clear water in a broad stream. The little pond became a small lake. The water continued to flow out of the basket and the little lake became a big lake. The deep water was so clear that Polaman could see the two fish at the bottom. And as he looked one of the fish opened its tiny mouth and said, in the same thin, high voice that Polaman had heard so many times:

"Polaman, we are the sacred fish which Brahma sent to inhabit this lake and to stock it with our descendants. And because you brought us here, the lake is to be called by your name—the Lake of Polaman. You are not to go back to your village at the foot of Smeru. You are to stay in this neighborhood and found a village here which, even as the lake, shall bear your name. Be sure to tell everyone who comes here to

live or to visit that we are sacred fish, and that we must never be caught, or killed, or eaten. That is Brahma's will, and he will punish anyone who does us harm, as he will reward anyone who is good to us."

Polaman could not believe his ears. "It is a great honor," he said humbly, when he could find his voice. For he was remembering his dream and how people had scoffed at him. Yet it had come to pass—he had performed a miracle!

To this day the lake is known by his name, and the village, too. But never since the day the Lake of Polaman was formed have the fish spoken again.



THE WONDER-TREE



ONCE UPON A TIME, long, long ago, three orphaned sisters lived together in a small hut. They were very poor. To earn a little money, they helped neighboring farmers get their fields ready for planting, and helped them again at harvest time.

It was while the two older sisters were garnering grain in a harvest field that they came upon a little bird cowering under some rice stalks. He did not flit away as they approached, and he looked at them so piteously that they picked him up and took him home with them. They found that he was not injured, but he did not seem to want to fly away.

So they plaited a little cage of rattan for him, and the bird flew into the cage and was happy. Now the girls hated to leave their hut in the morning, and they could hardly wait to get home in the evening, for the bird was always there waiting for them, cocking his head to one side and chirping a greeting. They called him *Kekeko*, because that was what he said: *Kekeko, kekeko*.

The girls had so little to eat that they were always hungry; nevertheless they always managed to save a few grains of rice or bits of fruit for *Kekeko*.

They had had the bird only a short time when one day he

astonished them by speaking. "Set me in a basket," he chirped, "and I will lay."

At first they could not believe that he had really said the words.

"Did you hear him?" the oldest sister asked the others.

"He said, 'Set me in a basket and I will lay,'" the second sister said.

And the third, and youngest, sister piped up, "I heard him, too. That's just what he said. But do you suppose he really means it?"

"Of course I mean it," Kekeko said impatiently. "Set me in a basket and I will lay."

So finally they did as he demanded; but, though they watched for hours, nothing happened. They ate their meager supper and put a few scraps in Kekeko's basket. At last they were so tired that they stretched out on their mats and went to sleep.

Next morning they ran to the basket, and lo—it was full of cooked rice and fish!

The girls had never had so much to eat. They ate until they could eat no more, and still there was plenty left. Kekeko looked happy, but he said nothing until late in the afternoon. Then he ordered, "Set me in the basket and I will lay."

This time they hurried to do his bidding and, sure enough, next morning the basket was overflowing with cooked rice and fish. Now the sisters had more than enough; they could not find room for all the food.

Day after day this happened, until at last the three sisters implored the bird to give them uncooked rice instead. Then they could store it, and not have to throw good food away. Kekeko nodded, and next morning the basket contained only uncooked rice—but a great mound of it!

They put the rice in baskets and hampers. They cooked all they needed, and there was still rice left over. Visitors who came to the little hut marveled that the three girls, who had always been so poor, now had a wealth of rice—enough and to spare.

News got about the village, and spread to the next village where their uncle lived. He had never bothered with them since their parents had died, and had not offered to help them in any way. But when he heard of their great store of rice, he came in a hurry, rubbing his hands and beaming at them.

"I have always wanted to visit you," he said. "And I am sorry it has been such a long time since I've inquired about your health. But I've been busy. It takes all my time to work my poor fields and to get enough food for my family." He looked around the hut and said, in pretended surprise, "How does it happen, my dear nieces, that you have such a wealth of rice? You have come into a fortune? Your neighbors supply you, perhaps? Surely you did not earn all this yourselves."

The youngest sister said eagerly, "Oh, no, uncle. You see, we never had enough to eat, but now our bird, Kekeko, which my sisters caught, gives us all our rice."

"Now that is impossible!" their uncle exclaimed, eyeing the bird. It was hard for him to keep on smiling, for his heart was filled with envy. To think that these girls had all the rice they needed and more, while he had barely enough to feed his family!

"Kekeko gives us rice every day," the youngest child said.

The uncle's eyes glittered with greed. "Then surely you could spare him for a few days for your old uncle," he whined. "Just for a little while, till my baskets and hampers are full."

Kekeko squawked suddenly, as if he did not want to go, and the older sisters looked at one another doubtfully. But their

uncle kept pleading, "Just for a few days, my dear nieces! You would not deny this to your poor uncle?"

And at last they let their uncle take the bird, but the oldest sister managed to whisper to Kekeko, "Do not give him good rice, Kekeko. He has not been kind to us, and we could have starved for all he cared."

Kekeko nodded his bright head, and the uncle, after a short time, took the bird with him back to his village.

The girls waited for their uncle to return Kekeko, but he did not come. They waited a week, and still their uncle did not appear.

Their store of rice was shrinking, but, more important than that, they missed Kekeko and wanted him back. They cleaned his cage and put aside some of their best rice and fish for the bird, and then set out to visit their uncle and fetch Kekeko.

But when they got there, they could not see Kekeko anywhere. Their uncle snarled at them, "He is not here."

"Why? What have you done with him?" the sisters asked.

"I ate him," their uncle said angrily.

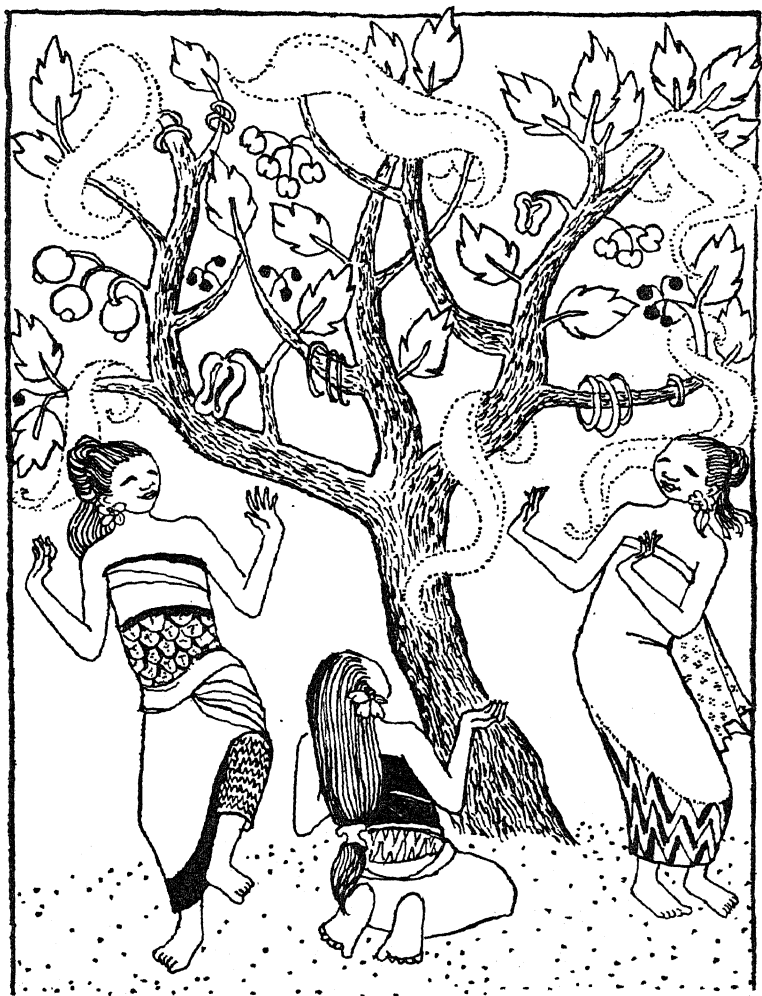
"Oh, uncle, surely you did not eat our darling Kekeko! Why would you do such a thing?"

"The wretched bird did not give me any rice," the man shouted. "None at all! Day after day I ordered him to give me rice, but he would not. And so I killed him . . . and to make sure that he was gone, I ate him. The miserable creature!"

When they heard that, the sisters fell to the ground, crying and moaning. "Now we shall never get our Kekeko back!" they wept.

"If you want him back, find his bones," their uncle said cruelly. He laughed to see them searching over the ground for the bones of the little bird.

They gathered up all the tiny bones they could find and



wrapped them in a cloth. Sorrowfully, they walked back to their village, mourning because the bird was lost to them forever. When they reached their hut they put the bones in the little cage and, with tears running down their cheeks, buried it in the soft earth near the house.

Soon, they thought, they would be poor again, for their rice

and fish would not last long. Soon they must work the fields again and depend on their farmer neighbors for help. But, worst of all, they would miss the bright head and the chirping voice of their Kekeko. They fell asleep, crying, in the dark.

Next morning, just as the sun was up, they rose to take a little offering of flowers to the place where Kekeko lay buried. And as they approached the spot they stopped in amazement, and their eyes grew round and their mouths fell open. For a wonderful tree had grown over the place where Kekeko was buried—a tree with leaves of shimmering silk, with great blossoms of shining earrings and jeweled pins, with marvelous fruits that tinkled with a beautiful sound. A tree on which, pluck as they would, there always remained leaves of shimmering silk and blossoms of shining earrings and jeweled pins, and fruits that tinkled musically all day long. Their wonder-tree, the sisters called it. But they all knew it was really their darling Kekeko who was still helping them, even though they would never see him again.



GLOSSARY



adat (ah-daht)—custom

alang-alang (ah-lahng-ah-lahng)—a tall grass with long, sharp blades

Allah (ah-lah)—the Mohammedans' name for God

Amboina (ahm-boy-nah)—an island of Indonesia

Baduwi (ba-doo-wee)—the name of a tribe

Bantam (bahn-tahm)—a province of Java

Batak (bah-tahk)—a region of Sumatra; also the name of the people who live there

Batara Guru (bah-tah-rah goo-roo)—one of the demigods; he played a part in creating the world

batok (bah-tok)—half a coconut shell

Besi (beh-sih)—an island between Java and Sumatra

betel (bee-t'l)—a type of palm tree; the fruit, the betel nut, is ground, wrapped with lime in the leaves of the palm and chewed by East Indians

Borneo (bohr-nee-oh)—one of the largest islands of Indonesia

Brahma (brah-mah)—the chief god of the Hindu trinity (the others are Vishnu and Siva); Brahma is regarded as the creator of the universe

Brahman (brah-man)—a Hindu of the highest caste

- Bromo (broh-mo)—a volcanic mountain in Java; also the name of the mountain giant
- buata (boo-ah-tah)—a demon of the air
- Celebes (seh-leh-bes)—a large island of the Indonesian group
- dewi (de-wih)—goddess
- Dewi Sri (de-wih srih)—the wife of Vishnu
- Durga (dur-gah)—the goddess who once conquered the buffaloes
- Dwars-in-den-weg—one of the small islands between Java and Sumatra
- Dyak (dy-yak)—one of the tribes (or a member of the tribe) of Borneo
- gamelan (gah-meh-lahn)—an orchestra composed of xylophones, gongs, drums and cymbals
- guning (goo-noong)—mountain
- Hindu (hin-doo)—one who belongs to the religious faith of Hinduism
- ikan leleh (ih-kahn leh-leh)—a long, dark grey fish, resembling an eel
- Indra (in-drah)—chief god of the early Hindu religion; he wields thunderbolts, and overcomes enemies
- Islam (is-lahm)—the religion and doctrine of Mohammedanism; it also refers to all Moslems and the countries they occupy
- Java (jah-vah)—one of the main islands of Indonesia
- kai (ky)—old or respected
- Kajangka (kah-jahng-kah)—ruler of the moon
- Kama Jaja (kah-mah jah-jah)—the protector of married people
- kanchil (kahn-tchil)—the mouse-deer
- Karang (kah-rahng)—the name of a mountain
- Karang-Bolong (kah-rahng boh-long)—cliffs on the shores of Java
- karbau (kar-bah-oo)—the water buffalo

- Kawitjaksana (kah-wit-jahk-sah-nah)—a name meaning "hermit full of wisdom"
- Kembang Manis (kem-bahng mah-nis)—a name meaning "lovely flower"
- Kendang (ken-dahng)—a mountain range
- Krakatau (kra-ka-tah-oo)—an island volcano between Java and Sumatra
- kris (krees)—the dagger used by Indonesians
- Lombok (lom-bohk)—an island of Indonesia
- Lurah Dalam (loo-rah dah-lam)—a favorite of the gods who, by day, ruled over the kingdom of Bantam
- Macassar (mah-kahs-sahr)—a city on the island of Celebes
- Majapahit (mah-jah-pah-hit)—a powerful Indonesian dynasty before the advent of Mohammedanism
- Mecca (mek-kah)—a city in Arabia; it is the birthplace of Mohammed, and therefore a holy city to Moslems
- Merbabu (mer-bah-boo)—a mountain
- Minangkabau (min-ahng-kah-bah-oo)—the name by which western Sumatra was first known
- Mohammed (mo-hahm-med)—the prophet and founder of the Mohammedan religion
- monsoon (mon-soon)—a seasonal wind; also the rainy season (June to September) beginning with the onset of the south-west winds
- Moslem (mos-lem)—followers of the religion of Mohammed
- nai (ny)—housekeeper or wife
- paddy—a wet or irrigated rice field; the word may also refer to rice in the husk, growing or gathered
- pariah (pa-ri-ah)—a member of a low caste of southern India and Burma
- Perak (peh-rahk)—a town in Indonesia
- Pulosari (poo-lo-sah-rih)—a mountain
- raden (rah-den)—ruler

- raja (rah-jah)—a king or ruler
raksasa (rahk-sah-sah)—a giant; also a temple watchman
rattan—any climbing palm whose long, tough stems are used in making wickerwork
ratu (rah-too)—queen
Ratu Loro Kidul (rah-too loh-roh kih-dool)—the Queen of the South Seas
Rongkob (rong-kob)—a town in Java
Sanagara (sah-nah-gah-rah)—a powerful king who once conquered a large part of Indonesia
sawah (sah-wah)—a wet rice field
Segara Anakan (seh-gah-rah ah-nah-kahn)—the Children's Sea
Segarawedi (seh-gah-rah-we-dih)—a mountain
Singosari (sing-oh-sah-rih)—a town in Java
sirih set—the implements and vessels used for preparing betel nut, which is mixed with lime and chewed; the sets belonging to nobles or kings were often made of gold
Smeru (smeh-roo)—a volcanic mountain in Java
Sumatra (soo-mah-trah)—one of the largest islands of Indonesia
Sunda (soon-dah)—the name of the straits between Java and Sumatra
Surabaya (soo-rah-by-yah)—a city in Java
tapa (tah-pah)—a hermit or holy man
Tengger (teng-ger)—a mountain range
tuan (too-ahn)—a term of respect equal to "master"
Vishnu (vish-noo)—the second member of the Hindu trinity; he is called the "preserver"
waringen (wah-ring-en)—the banyan tree
warong (wah-rong)—a portable stove on which food is cooked, often along the roads
waru wanggi (wah-roo wahng-gih)—a tree; *wanggi* means "fragrant"



The Author

After her graduation from the Hartridge School for Girls in Plainfield, New Jersey, Adèle de Leeuw chose travel in place of college, and says that she has never regretted the choice. Her father was a Hollander, and the family lived in the Netherlands for months at a time. Out of this experience came one of her first books, *The Flavor of Holland*, which was endorsed and distributed by the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace; it was illustrated with her own photographs.

Miss de Leeuw has traveled in many countries. She spent six months in the Dutch East Indies, as Indonesia was then called, and there she heard many of the stories in this book. Others she has translated from the Dutch (which she reads and speaks) or adapted from books on Indonesian folklore.

Miss de Leeuw is the author of two volumes of verse and more than a score of books for young people.



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